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南郡争奪戦

横山光輝

希望コミックス 85

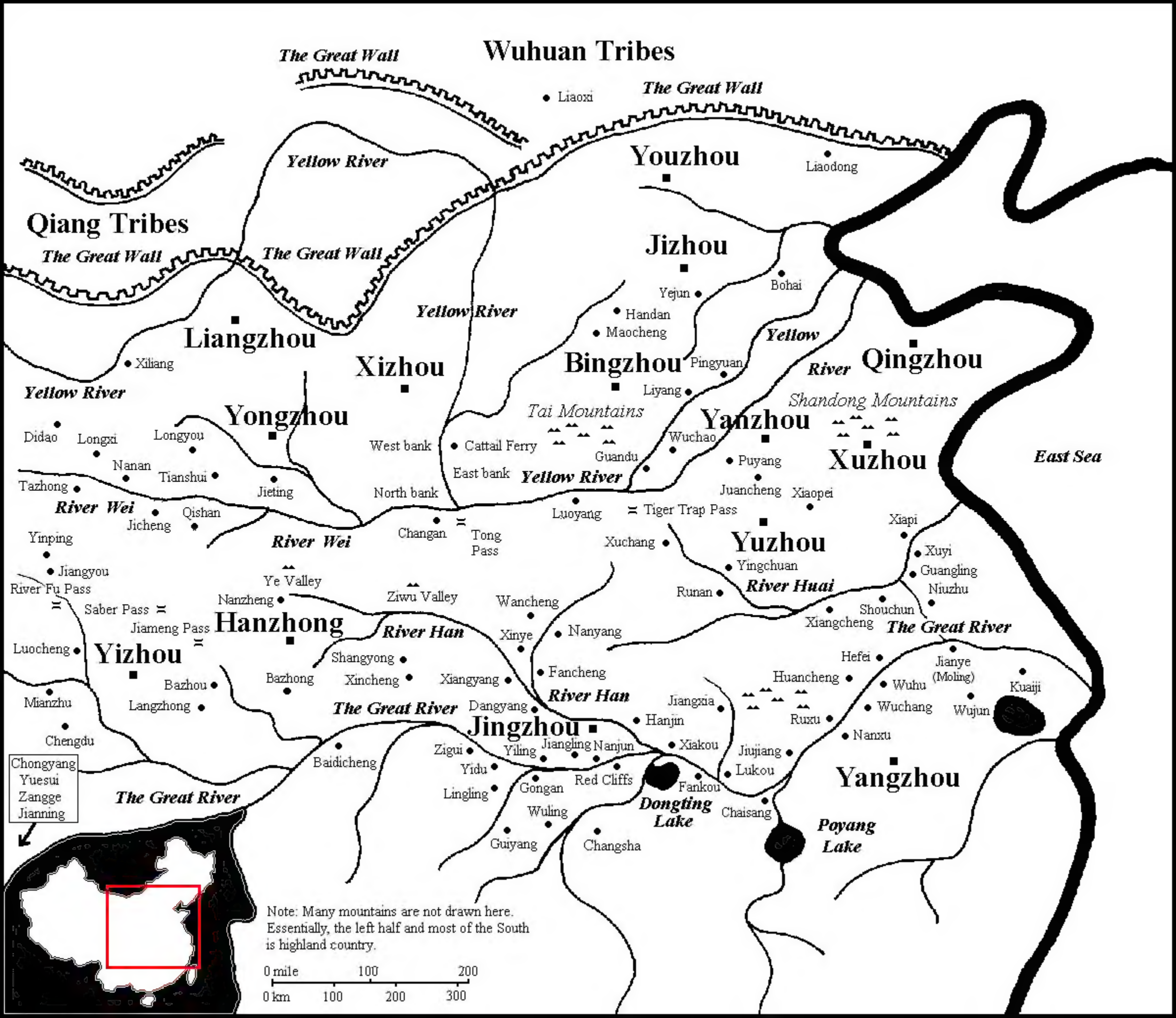
SANGOKUSHI

27

NANJUN
CAMPAIGN

ZHOU YU GONGJIN

YOKOYAMA
MITSUTERU


Wuhuan Tribes
The Great Wall
The Great Wall
Liaoxi
Youzhou
Liaodong
Yellow River
Qiang Tribes
The Great Wall
The Great Wall
Jizhou
Bohai
Yejun
Handan
Maocheng
Yellow River
Liangzhou
Xizhou
Bingzhou
Pingyuan
Yellow River
Qingzhou
Xiliang
Yellow River
Liyang
Shandong Mountains
Tai Mountains
Yongzhou
Yanzhou
Didao
Longxi
Longyou
West bank
Cattail Ferry
Wuchao
Guandu
Xuzhou
East Sea
Nanan
East bank
Yellow River
Puyang
Tianshui
Tazhong
Jieting
North bank
Juancheng
Xiaopei
River Wei
Qishan
Luoyang
Tiger Trap Pass
Jicheng
Changan
Tong Pass
Xuchang
Yuzhou
Xiapi
Yinping
River Wei
Xuyi
Jiangyou
Ye Valley
Yingchuan
Guangling
River Fu Pass
Ziwu Valley
Runan
River Huai
Niuzhu
Saber Pass
Nanzheng
Wancheng
Shouchun
Jiameng Pass
Hanzhong
River Han
Xinye
Nanyang
Xiangcheng
The Great River
Luocheng
Yizhou
Shangyong
Hefei
Jianye (Moling)
Fancheng
Huancheng
Bazhou
Bazhong
Xincheng
Xiangyang
Wuhu
Kuaiji
River Han
Jiangxia
Mianzhu
Langzhong
The Great River
Dangyang
Wuchang
Wujun
Ruxu
Hanjin
Jingzhou
Nanxu
Chengdu
Zigui
Yiling
Jiangling
Nanjun
Xiakou
Jiujiang
Baidicheng
Yidu
Lukou
Yangzhou
Chongyang
Yuesui
Zangge
Jianning
Red Cliffs
Fankou
Lingling
Gongan
Dongting Lake
Chaisang
The Great River
Wuling
Poyang Lake
Guiyang
Changsha
Note: Many mountains are not drawn here.
Essentially, the left half and most of the South
is highland country.
0 mile 100 200
0 km 100 200 300

SANGOKUSHI'S CAST OF CHARACTERS

PART 1: CHARACTERS TO KEEP IN MIND

CAO CAO MENGDE:
THE AMBITIOUS AND MACHIAVELLIAN HERO OF SANGOKUSHI. HAVING BECOME THE CHANCELLOR OF HAN, HE HAS RELEGATED EMPEROR XIAN AS A MERE PUPPET RULER.

CHEN DENG:
THE SON OF CHEN GUI AND FORMERLY TAO QIAN OF XUZHOU'S SUBORDINATE. HE AND HIS FATHER SUCCESSFULLY PLOTTED LU BU'S DOWNFALL.

CHEN GUI:
FATHER OF CHEN DENG WHO SUCCESSFULLY PLOTTED LU BU'S DOWNFALL. DESPITE SECRETLY WORKING TOGETHER WITH LIU BEI AGAINST CAO CAO, CAO CAO SPARES HIS LIFE AND ALLOWS HIM TO CONTINUE LIVING IN XUZHOU.

CHENG GONG:
A CITY GUARD CAPTAIN WHO ARRESTED CAO CAO, ONLY TO FREE AND ESCAPE WITH HIM AFTER SYMPATHIZING WITH HIS STORY. HOWEVER, HE LATER DEFECTS TO LU BU AND SERVES AS HIS ADVISOR. IN VOLUME 14, HE IS EXECUTED ALONG WITH LU BU.

EMPRESS HE:
ORIGINALY A PEASANT, HER BEAUTY WAS NOTICED BY THE TEN ATTENDANTS WHO THEN PRESENTED HER TO EMPEROR LING. SHE SOON BECAME EMPEROR LING'S FAVOURITE CONSORT AND GAVE BIRTH TO PRINCE LIU BIAN. HOWEVER, SHE AND HER SON WERE REMOVED FROM POWER AND KILLED BY DONG ZHUO WHEN HE CAME TO POWER.

DIAN WEI:
CAO CAO'S PERSONAL BODYGUARD, RENOWNED FOR HIS STRENGTH. HE IS ALSO KNOWN BY THE NICKNAME, "E LAI," IN REFERENCE TO THE MIGHTY GENERAL OF THE SAME NAME WHO SERVED UNDER KING ZHOU OF SHANG. IN VOLUME 12, HE WAS KILLED DURING ZHANG XIU'S PLOT TO KILL CAO CAO.

DIAO CHAN:
A SLAVE GIRL OF WANG YUN, WHO RAISED HER AS HIS OWN DAUGHTER. SHE AND WANG YUN PLOTTED TO DISTANCE LU BU FROM DONG ZHUO BY HAVING HER SEDUCE BOTH MEN. IN VOLUME 8, SHE COMMITTED SUICIDE AFTER ACCOMPLISHING HER GOAL.

DONG CHENG:
ELDER STATESMAN OF HAN WHO IS EMPEROR XIAN'S CONFIDANT. EMPEROR XIAN SECRETELY ASKS HIM TO ELIMINATE CAO CAO, WHO NOW RULES THE IMPERIAL COURT AS CHANCELLOR. IN VOLUME 17, HE IS EXECUTED AFTER HIS ASSASSINATION PLOT IS FOUND OUT BY CAO CAO.

DONG ZHUO:
GOVERNOR OF LIANGZHOU WHO LATER SEIZED CONTROL OF LUOYANG AND SEATED HIMSELF AS THE CHANCELLOR OF HAN, BECOMING AN INFAMOUS TYRANT. IN VOLUME 8, HE IS BETRAYED AND KILLED BY HIS RIGHT-HAND MAN, LU BU.

GAN NING:
FORMER-PIRATE WHO IS NOW A FIRECE GENERAL OF WU.

GONGSUN ZAN:
GOVERNOR OF BEIPING AND FRIEND TO LIU BEI. HE WAGES WAR AGAINST YUAN SHAO AFTER THE LATTER TRICKS HIM AND KILLS HIS YOUNG BROTHER. IN VOLUME 15, YUAN SHAO'S ARMY CONQUERS BEIPING, CAUSING GONGSUN ZAN TO COMMIT SUICIDE.

GUAN YU YUNCHANG:
SWORN YOUNGER BROTHER TO LIU BEI AND SWORN OLDER BROTHER TO ZHANG FEI. HE IS AS FIERCE AS GUAN YU BUT IS MORE RESTRAINED AND CALM IN HIS MANNERISMS.

GUAN PING:
GUAN YU'S ADOPTED SON WHO FIRST APPEARS IN VOLUME 19.

GUO JIA:
THE TALENTED STRATEGIST AND ADVISOR TO CAO CAO. HE DIES FROM ILLNESS DURING CAO CAO'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE YUAN FAMILY (UNSHOWN IN MANGA).

JIA XU:
THE SHREWD STRATEGIST AND ADVISOR TO ZHANG XIU. HE AND ZHANG XIU PLOTS A FAILED ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON CAO CAO, BUT SUCCEEDS IN KILLING DIAN WEI. IN VOLUME 16, HE AND ZHANG XIU DEFECT TO CAO CAO'S SIDE.

LI RU:
CUNNING ADVISOR TO DONG ZHUO. WITH HIS ADVICE, DONG ZHUO FIRMLY SECURES HIS SEAT AS THE CHANCELLOR OF HAN. IN VOLUME 8, HE IS KILLED ALONG WITH DONG ZHUO WHEN LU BU REBELS.

LIU BEI XUANDE:
THE CENTRAL CHARACTER OF SANGOKUSHI. A KIND AND VIRTUOUS MAN, SAID TO BE THE DESCENDANT OF EMPEROR JING OF HAN. HE HAS SWORN AN OATH OF BROTHERHOOD WITH GUAN YU AND ZHANG FEI.

LIU BIAO:
THE GOVERNOR OF JINGZHOU. HE PASSES AWAY DUE TO SICKNESS IN VOLUME 22.

LIU XIE (EMPEROR XIAN OF HAN):
FORMERLY KNOWN AS PRINCE OF CHENLIU, HE IS THE CURRENT EMPEROR OF HAN, THOUGH CAO CAO HAS SEIZED ALL REAL POWER AWAY FROM HIM.

LU BU:
HE IS SAID TO BE THE STRONGEST WARRIOR WITH THE FASTEST HORSE, THE RED HARE. IN VOLUME 14, HE WAS BETRAYED BY HIS SUBORDINATES, AND EXECUTED BY CAO CAO.

LU SU:
MILITARY GENERAL AND ADVISOR OF WU.

MA TENG:
GOVERNOR OF XILIANG AND FATHER OF MA CHAO. UNLIKE THE ACTUAL HISTORICAL FIGURE, HE IS DEPICTED AS A HAN LOYALIST WHO SIGNS DONG CHENG'S BLOOD SEAL PLEDGE.

PANG TONG SHIYUAN:
NICKNAMED THE YOUNG PHOENIX (FENGCHU), HE IS A MASTERFUL STRATEGIST WHO STUDIED UNDER SHUI JING, ALONG WITH ZHUGE LIANG AND XU SHU. HE CURRENTLY SERVES NO LORD BUT ASSISTS WU IN THE BATTLE OF RED CLIFFS.

SHUI JING:
HIS REAL NAME IS SIMA HUI BUT HE IS MORE COMMONLY KNOWN BY HIS TAOIST NAME, SHUI JING (MEANING WATER MIRROR). HE IS THE TEACHER OF ZHUGE LIANG, PANG TONG, AND XU SHU.

SUN CE:
ELDEST SON OF SUN JIAN. IN VOLUME 19, ASSASSINS MAKE A FAILED ATTEMPT AT HIS LIFE. HIS MENTAL HEALTH SOON DETERIORATES DUE TO THE INCIDENT WITH YU JI AND HE SUCCUMBS TO DEATH.

SUN JIAN:
BORN IN WU COMMANDERY, HE WAS THE GOVERNOR OF CHANGSHA. HE PARTICIPATES IN THE ALLIANCE TO BRING DOWN DONG ZHUO. BUT IS FINDING OF THE IMPERIAL SEAL CAUSES LIU BIAO AND YUAN SHAO TO TURN ON HIM. IN VOLUME 7, HE TRIES TO EXACT HIS REVENGE ON LIU BIAO, ONLY TO BE KILLED IN BATTLE.

SUN QUAN:
YOUNGER BROTHER OF SUN CE AND THE CURRENT RULER OF WU, A REGION IN SOUTHERN CHINA.

TAISHI CI:
SUN CE'S TRUSTED GENERAL WHO DEFECTED TO SERVE SUN CE AFTER BEING CAPTURED IN VOLUME 11.

TAO QIAN:
THE KIND GOVERNOR OF XUZHOU WHO ACCIDENTALLY INVOKES CAO CAO'S WRATH WHEN HIS DISLOYAL SUBORDINATE ZHANG KAI KILLS CAO CAO'S FATHER, CAO SONG.

THE TEN ATTENDANTS:
A CORRUPT GROUP OF 10 EUNUCHS WHO WERE THE HIGHEST RANKING MINISTERS OF THE IMPERIAL COURT. THEY SUCCEEDED IN ASSASSINATING GENERAL HE JIN BUT WERE LATER KILLED BY HE JIN'S ARMY LED BY YUAN SHAO.

WANG YUN:
AN OLD MAN WHO HOLDS THE POST OF MINISTER OF THE MASSES, ONE OF THE 3 HIGHEST RANKING POSTS IN HAN IMPERIAL COURT. HE SUCCESSFULLY PLOTS DONG ZHUO'S DOWNFALL USING DIAO CHANG IN VOLUME 8. HOWEVER, HE IS LATER KILLED BY REMNANTS OF DONG ZHUO'S ARMY (UNSHOWN IN MANGA).

WEN CHOU:
HE AND YANG LIANG ARE YUAN SHAO'S TWO STRONGEST GENERALS. IN VOLUME 18, HE IS AMBUSHED BY CAO CAO'S ARMY AND KILLED BY GUAN YU.

XIAHOU DUN:
TRUSTED GENERAL OF CAO CAO. HE LOST HIS LEFT EYE DURING A BATTLE AGAINST LU BU'S ARMY IN VOLUME 13.

XU CHU:
TRUSTED GENERAL OF CAO CAO. ORIGINALY A PEASANT, HE WAS RECRUITED BY CAO CAO WHO WAS IMPRESSED AFTER SEEING XU CHU'S DUEL WITH DIAN WEI.

XU SHU (SHAN FU):
THE TALENTED STRATEGIST WHO STUDIED UNDER SHUI JING. AFTER A BRIEF STINT OF SERVING LIU BEI, HE IS TRICKED INTO COMING TO XUCHANG AND SERVING CAO CAO (VOLUME 21).

XUN YU:
ONE OF CAO CAO'S MOST TALENTED ADVISORS.

YAN LIANG:
HE AND WEN CHOU ARE YUAN SHAO'S TWO STRONGEST GENERALS. IN VOLUME 17, HE WAS KILLED BY GUAN YU WHILE FIGHTING CAO CAO'S ARMY AT BAIMA.

YI JI:
AN ADVISOR TO LIU BIAO WHO WARNS LIU BEI ABOUT CAI MAO'S PLOT TO ASSASSINATE LIU BEI IN VOLUME 20.

YUAN SHAO:
OLDER BROTHER OF YUAN SHU AND THE GOVERNOR OF JIZHOU. AFTER MANY YEARS OF WARRING AGAINST CAO CAO FOR CONTROL OF NORTHERN CHINA, HE AND HIS FAMILY IS DEFEATED AND KILLED.

YUAN SHU:
YOUNGER BROTHER OF YUAN SHAO AND THE GOVERNOR OF NANYANG. AFTER RECEIVING THE IMPERIAL SEAL FROM SUN CE, HE DECLARES HIMSELF AS THE EMPEROR OF ZHONG DYNASTY. IN VOLUME 15, HE DIES OF THIRST AFTER BEING ON THE RUN FROM LIU BEI AND CAO CAO'S ARMIES.

ZHANG FEI YIDE:
A FIRECE, SHORT-TEMPERED WARRIOR WHO IS THE SWORN YOUNGER BROTHER OF LIU BEI AND GUAN YU.

ZHANG LIAO:
ONE OF CAO CAO'S TOP GENERALS. HE WAS FORMERLY LU BU'S SUBORDINATE BUT DEFECTED TO CAO CAO AFTER THE FORMER'S EXECUTION.

ZHANG XIU:
LORD OF WANCHENG WHO ATTEMPTED TO KILL CAO CAO DURING THE BATTLE OF WANCHENG IN VOLUME 12. AFTER YEARS OF CONFLICT AGAINST CAO CAO, HE FINALLY DECIDES TO DEFECT TO CAO CAO IN VOLUME 16.

ZHAO YUN ZILONG:
A FORMER RETAINER TO YUAN SHAO WHO LATER DEFECTED TO SERVE GONGSUN ZAN. AFTER GONGSUN ZAN'S DEATH, HE LATER MEETS UP WITH LIU BEI AND FINALLY BECOMES HIS RETAINER.

ZHOU CANG:
FORMERLY A YELLOW TURBAN, HE MEETS GUAN YU IN VOLUME 18 AND BECOMES HIS SUBORDINATE.

ZHOU YU GONGJIN:
SWORN BROTHER OF SUN CE, HE IS A SKILLED ADMIRAL WHO SERVES AS THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FOR WU'S ARMY. CONVINCED THAT HIS ALLY KONGMING IS TOO MUCH OF A THREAT, HE CURRENTLY SCHEMES FOR HIS DEATH.

ZHUGE LIANG KONGMING:
MASTERFUL STRATEGIST AND FORMER STUDENT OF SHUI JING. IN VOLUME 21, HE YIELDS TO LIU BEI'S PERSISTENCE AND DECIDES TO BECOME HIS SUBJECT.

SANGOKUSHI'S CAST OF CHARACTERS
PART 2: OTHER MINOR CHARACTERS

CAI MAO:
FORMER GENERAL OF LIU BIAO, WHO BECAME THE SUPREME ADMIRAL OF WEI'S NAVY WHEN JINGZHOU SURRENDERED TO CAO CAO. IN VOLUME 25, HE IS FRAMED BY ZHOU YU'S PLOT AND THUS EXECUTED BY CAO CAO.

CAO REN:
GENERAL SERVING UNDER CAO CAO.

CAO HONG:
GENERAL AND COUSIN TO CAO CAO. IN VOLUME 6, HE SAVES CAO CAO FROM CERTAIN DEATH.

CAO SONG:
CAO CAO'S FATHER AND A FORMER GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL. IN VOLUME 8, HE IS KILLED BY TAO QIAN'S ESCORT AND FORMER YELLOW TURBAN, ZHANG KAI.

DING YUAN:
GOVERNOR OF BINGZHOU AND LU BU'S FOSTER-FATHER. HE OBJECTED TO DONG ZHUO'S SCHEME TO PLACE PRINCE CHENLIU AS THE EMPEROR OF HAN, EARNING DONG ZHUO'S WRATH. IN VOLUME 4, HE IS BETRAYED AND KILLED BY HIS FOSTER-SON, LU BU, WHO THEN DEFECTS TO SERVE DONG ZHUO.

EMPRESS DOWAGER DONG:
MOTHER TO THE FORMER EMPEROR LING AND GRANDMOTHER TO EMPEROR XIAN. IN VOLUME 3, EMPRESS HE ORDERS FOR HER DEATH TO SECURE HER SON LIU BIAN'S THRONE AS THE NEXT EMPEROR OF HAN.

GAO SHUN:
ONE OF LU BU'S TRUSTED GENERALS. HE IS EXECUTED ALONG WITH HIS LORD IN VOLUME 14.

GUO SI:
A GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED DONG ZHUO. AFTER DONG ZHUO'S DEATH, HE AND LI JUE TOOK CONTROL OF LUOYANG AND DID AS THEY PLEASED UNTIL THE EMPEROR RUNS TO CAO CAO FOR PROTECTION.

HUANG GAI:
LOYAL GENERAL OF WU, WHOSE FAMILY HAS SERVED THE SUN FAMILY FOR THREE GENERATIONS.

HE JIN:
OLDER BROTHER OF EMPRESS HE. ORIGINALLY A SIMPLE BUTCHER, HE BECAME A GENERAL WHEN HIS YOUNGER SISTER BECAME EMPEROR LING'S CONSORT. IN VOLUME 3, HE ATTEMPTS TO ELIMINATE THE TEN ATTENDANTS, ONLY TO BE DISSUADED FROM DOING SO BY HIS YOUNGER SISTER. HE IS LATER KILLED BY THE TEN ATTENDANTS.

HOU CHENG:
ONE OF LU BU'S GENERALS. IN VOLUME 14, HE, ALONG WITH GENERALS WEI XU AND SONG XIAN, BETRAYS LU BU AND DEFECTS TO CAO CAO'S SIDE.

HUA XIONG:
FAMED GENERAL SERVING UNDER DONG ZHUO. IN VOLUME 5, HE DEFEATS SUN JIAN'S ARMY BUT IS LATER KILLED BY GUAN YU.

JI PING:
IMPERIAL PHYSICIAN OF HAN WHO, WITH DONG CHENG, PLOTS TO POISON CAO CAO. IN VOLUME 17, CAO CAO DISCOVERS THEIR PLOT AND EXECUTES HIM.

JIANG GAN:
CHILDHOOD FRIEND OF ZHOU YU AND NOW AN ADVISOR TO CAO CAO. IN VOLUME 25, HE FAILS TO PERSUADE ZHOU YU TO DEFECT TO CAO CAO, AND INADVERTANTLY HELPS ZHOU YU'S PLOT TO FRAME CAI MAO.

JIANG QIN:
FORMERLY A BANDIT ALONG WITH ZHOU TAI, BUT BECAME SUN CE'S SUBORDINATE OUT OF ADMIRATION FOR SUN CE'S FATHER, SUN JIAN.

LADY FUYOU:
FICTIONAL CHARACTER CREATED BY MITSUTERU YOKOYAMA AND LIU BEI'S FIRST LOVE. ZHANG FEI FORMERLY SERVED HER FAMILY, WHO WERE MASSCRED BY THE YELLOW TURBAN REBELS.

LADY MI:
LIU BEI'S FIRST WIFE.

LI JUE:
A GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED DONG ZHUO. AFTER DONG ZHUO'S DEATH, HE AND GUO SI TOOK CONTROL OF LUOYANG AND DID AS THEY PLEASED UNTIL THE EMPEROR RUNS TO CAO CAO FOR PROTECTION.

LI DIAN:
SCHOLARLY GENERAL UNDER THE SERVICE OF CAO CAO.

LIU BIAN:
THE SON OF EMPRESS HE AND BRIEFLY THE EMPEROR OF HAN AFTER THE DEATH OF HIS FATHER, EMPEROR LING. IN VOLUME 4, HE WAS DEPOSED BY DONG ZHUO AND LATER KILLED ALONG WITH HIS MOTHER BY LI RU.

LIU FENG:
LIU BEI'S ADOPTED SON. ORIGINALLY THE NEPHEW OF LIU MI, HE WAS ADOPTED BY LIU BEI WHO TOOK A LIKING TO HIM IN VOLUME 21.

LIU QI:
ELDEST SON OF LIU BIAO AND THE OLDER BROTHER OF LIU CONG.

MI ZHU:
ONE OF LIU BEI'S ADVISORS.

SUN QIAN:
ADVISOR/EMISSARY SERVING LIU BEI. (HIS ROLE IS MUCH SMALLER IN SANGOKUSHI COMPARED TO THE ORIGINAL NOVEL.)

YU JIN:
GENERAL SERVING CAO CAO. (IN RECORDS OF THE THRE KINGDOMS, WRITTEN BY CHEN SHOU, YU JIN IS CONSIDERED ONE OF THE FIVE TOP GENERALS FOR WEI.)

LU ZHI:
LIU BEI'S FORMER TEACHER AND THE PALACE COMMANDER WHO WAS PLACED IN CHARGE OF LEADING THE HAN ARMY AGAINST THE YELLOW TURBANS. HE WAS LATER DEMOTED FOR FAILING TO BRIBE ONE OF THE IMPERIAL MESSENGERS.

ZHANG BAO:
ZHANG JIAO'S YOUNGER BROTHER AND THE YELLOW TURBAN'S GENERAL OF THE LAND. HE WAS KILLED BY LIU BEI IN VOLUME 2.

ZHANG JIAO:
LEADER OF THE YELLOW TURBAN REBELLION. HE PASSED AWAY DUE TO ILLNESS IN VOLUME 3.

ZHANG ZHAO/ZHANG HONG:
THE TWO GENIUSES OF JIANGDONG, ALSO KNOWN AS THE "TWO ZHANGS." AFTER SUN CE'S ADMANT INSISTENCE, THEY DECIDE TO SERVE HIM AND HELP HIS CAMPAIGN TO CONQUER JIANGNAN AND JIANGDONG.

ZHOU TAI:
FORMERLY A BANDIT ALONG WITH JIANG QIN BUT BECAME SUN CE'S SUBORDINATE OUT OF ADMIRATION FOR HIS FATHER, SUN JIAN.

SANGOKUSHI (ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS)

三国志

VOLUME 27
NANJUN CAMPAIGN

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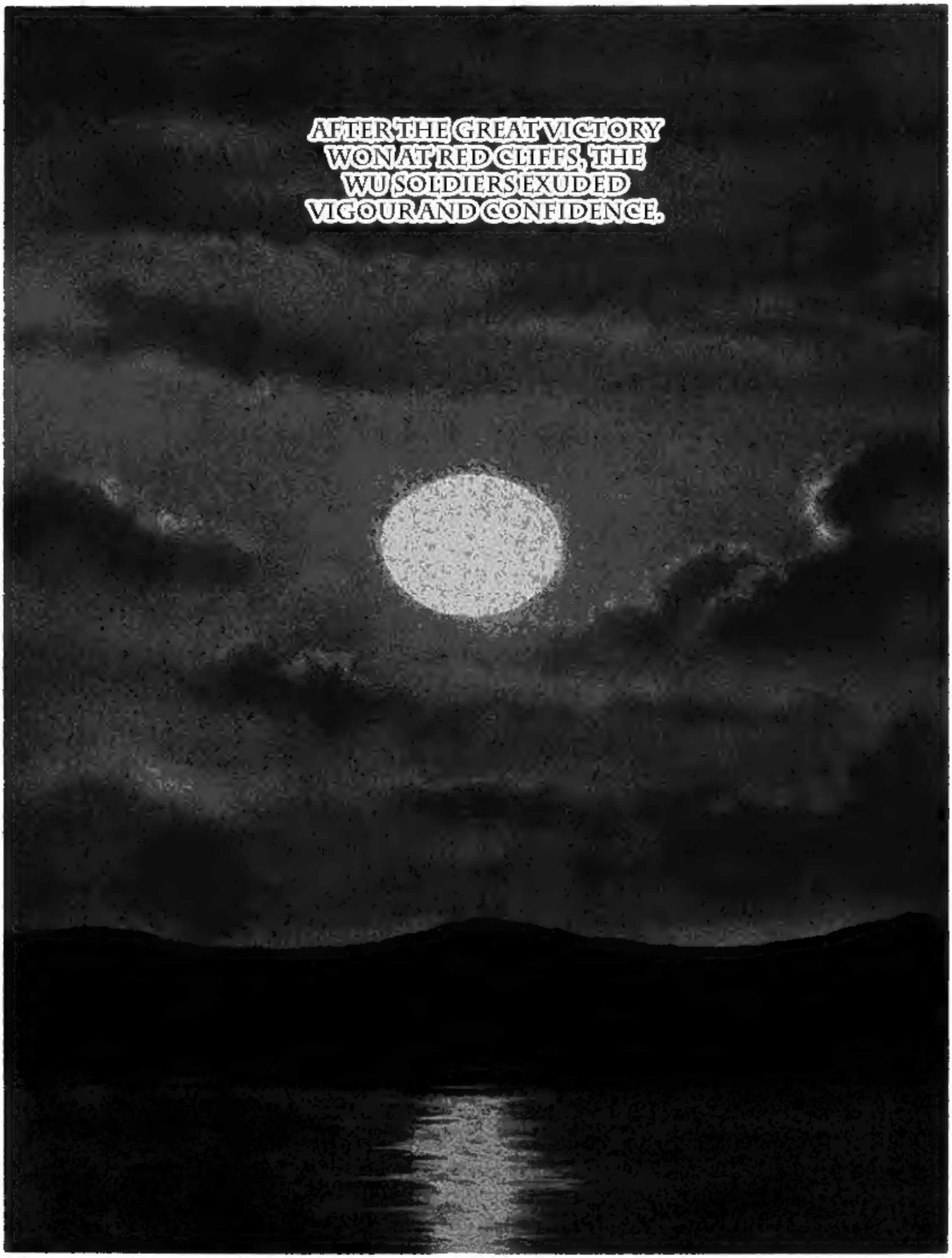
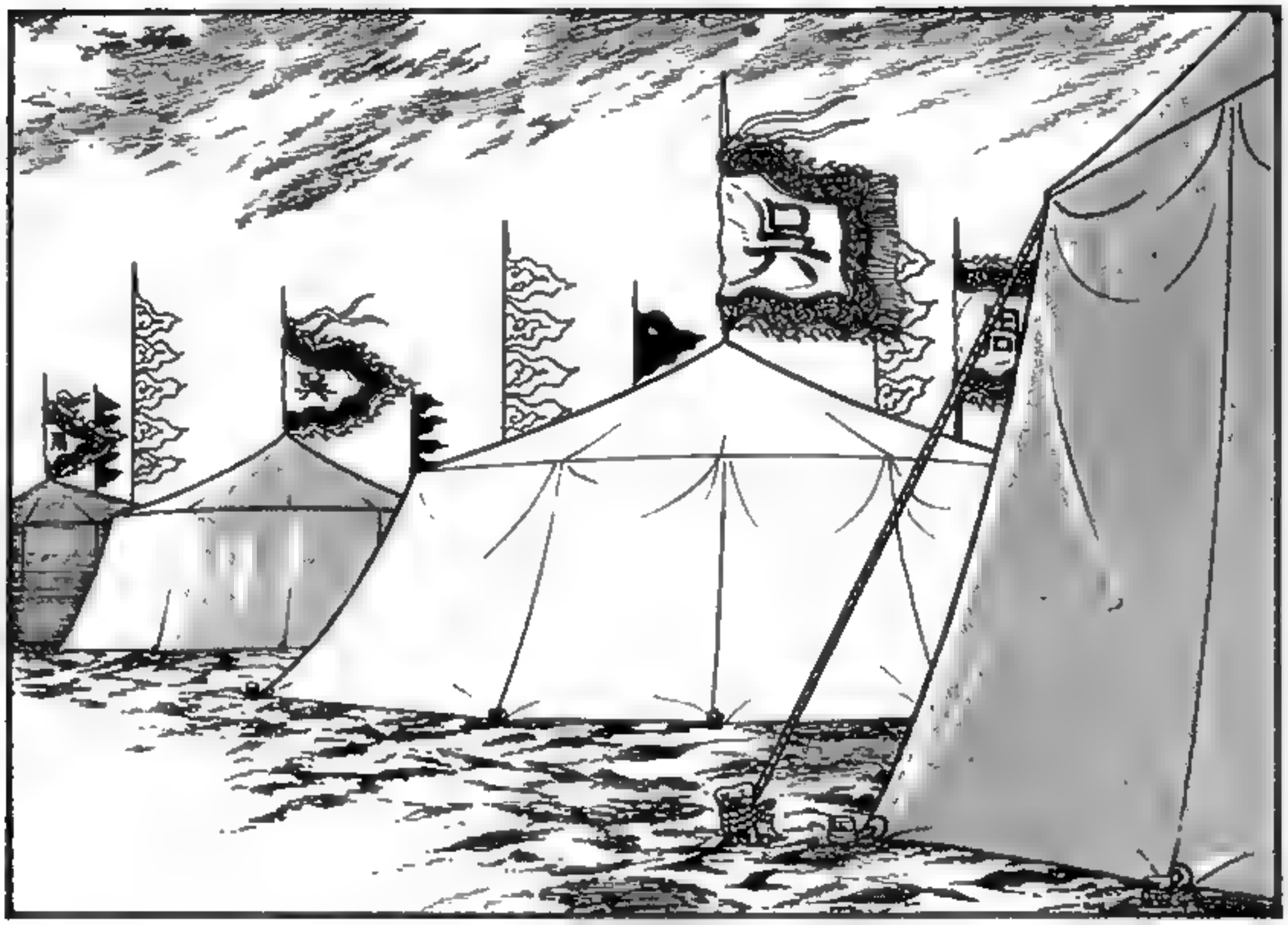
（月刊『ビッグコミック』掲載）

RIGHT OF FIRST ATTACK



WITH THE SURRENDERED ENEMIES CONVERTING TO THEIR SIDE.

THE ARMIES OF WU, LARGER AND STRONGER THAN EVER, STORMED INTO NANJUN.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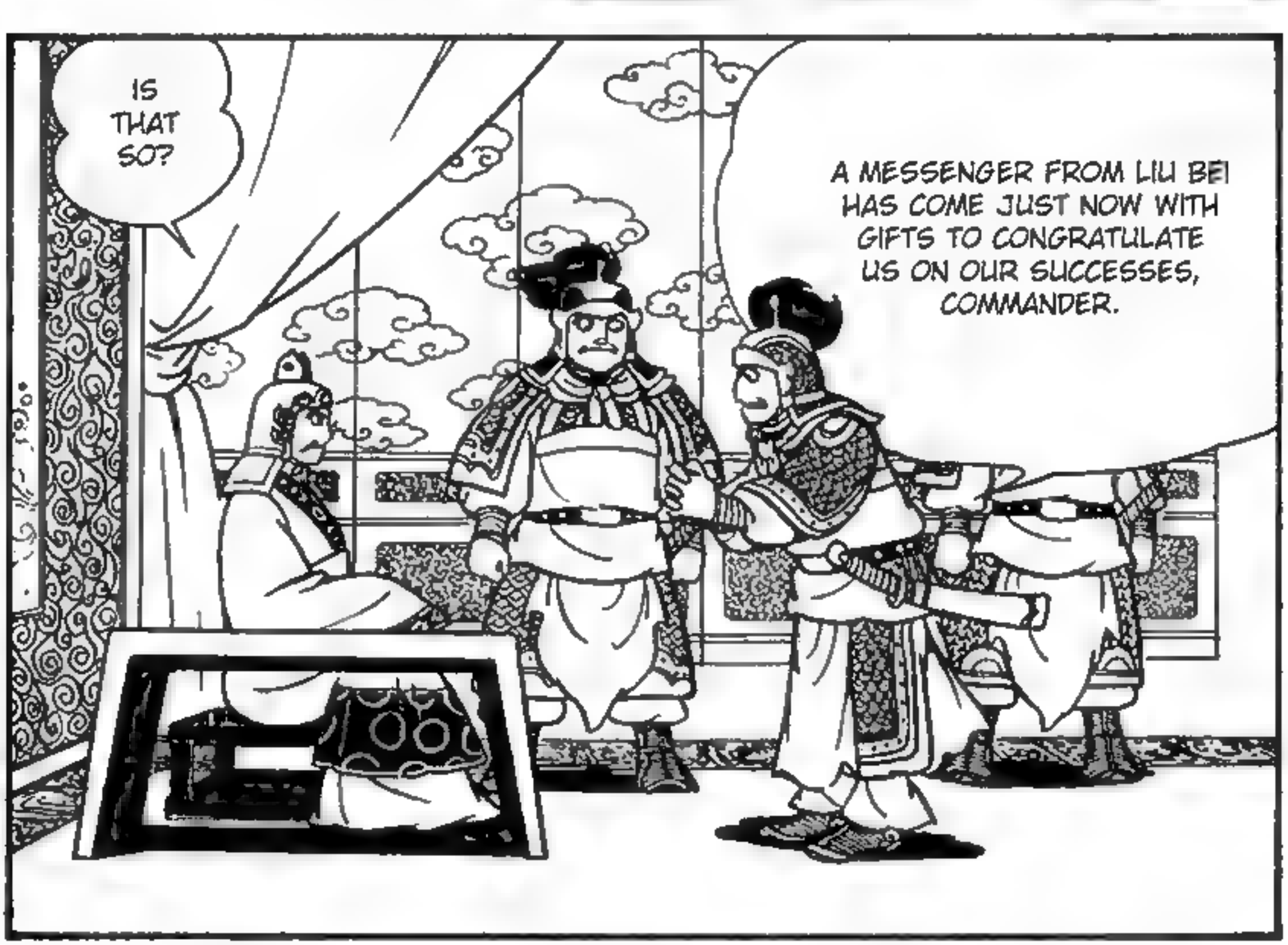

IS THAT SO?
A MESSENGER FROM LIU BEI HAS COME JUST NOW WITH GIFTS TO CONGRATULATE US ON OUR SUCCESSES, COMMANDER.

YES, SIR.

LET HIM THROUGH.

THIS WAY.

THANK YOU FOR COMING ALL THE WAY OUT HERE.

THANK YOU.

PLEASE, COME IN.

THANK YOU.
MY LORD WAS OVERJOYED TO HEAR THE GREAT VICTORY SIR HAS WON.

MUCH APPRECIATED.

PLEASE ACCEPT THESE GIFTS AS A TOKEN OF OUR GRATITUDE.

THEY ARE NOW AT YOUKOU.

BY THE WAY, WHERE MIGHT LIU BEI AND KONGMING BE PRESENTLY?

I SEE...

YOUKOU?

YES, SIR.

PLEASE TELL HIM I WILL COME THERE SOON IN PERSON TO THANK HIM.

YES, OF COURSE.

THEN I SHALL TAKE MY LEAVE.

.....

周

YES. DID YOU NOT HEAR JUST NOW THAT LIU BEI IS AT THE MOUTH OF YOU RIVER?

IS SOME-THING THE MATTER...?

WE HAVE SACRIFICED MUCH RESOURCES AND MANPOWER TO PUSH CAO CAO BACK NORTH.

THAT'S CLEAR PROOF THAT HE HAS PLANS TO TAKE NANJUN FOR HIMSELF.

HOWEVER, WITH NANJUN STILL IN CAO CAO'S CONTROL, WE HAVE YET TO REAP OUR REWARDS. NOW JUST IMAGINE THE VERY IDEA OF LIU BEI SWOOPING IN AT THE LAST MOMENT AND TAKING OUR VERY PRIZE!

I BELIEVE WE SHOULD CLEARLY MARK OUR INTENT TO THEM...

AH...!

WELL, THE SOONER THE BETTER THEN!

YES, THAT IS EXACTLY WHY I SAID I'D BE VISITING LIU BEI IN PERSON.

AT ONCE, COMMANDER.

GO ARRANGE THE NECESSARY PREPARATIONS.

HMM, IT SEEMS RATHER STRANGE HE WOULD BOTHER TO PERSONALLY COME HERE JUST FOR THAT ALONE... WHAT DO YOU FIGURE HIS REAL PURPOSE IS, KONGMING?

YES, MY LORD.

ZHOU YU SAID HE'D BE COMING IN PERSON TO REPAY MY GIFTS?

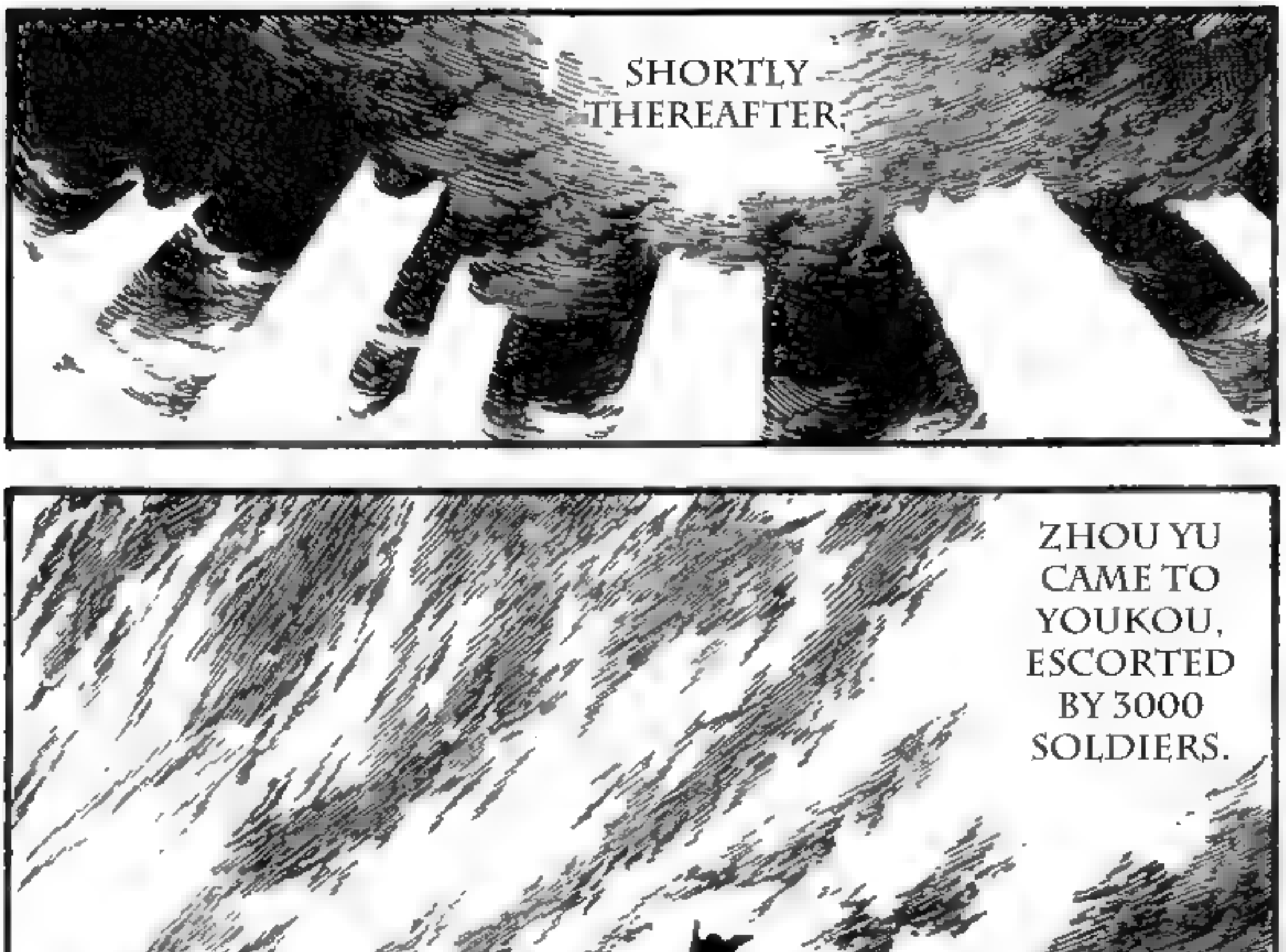
HE'S MOST LIKELY SUSPICIOUS OF OUR TROOPS MOVING IN ON NANJUN.

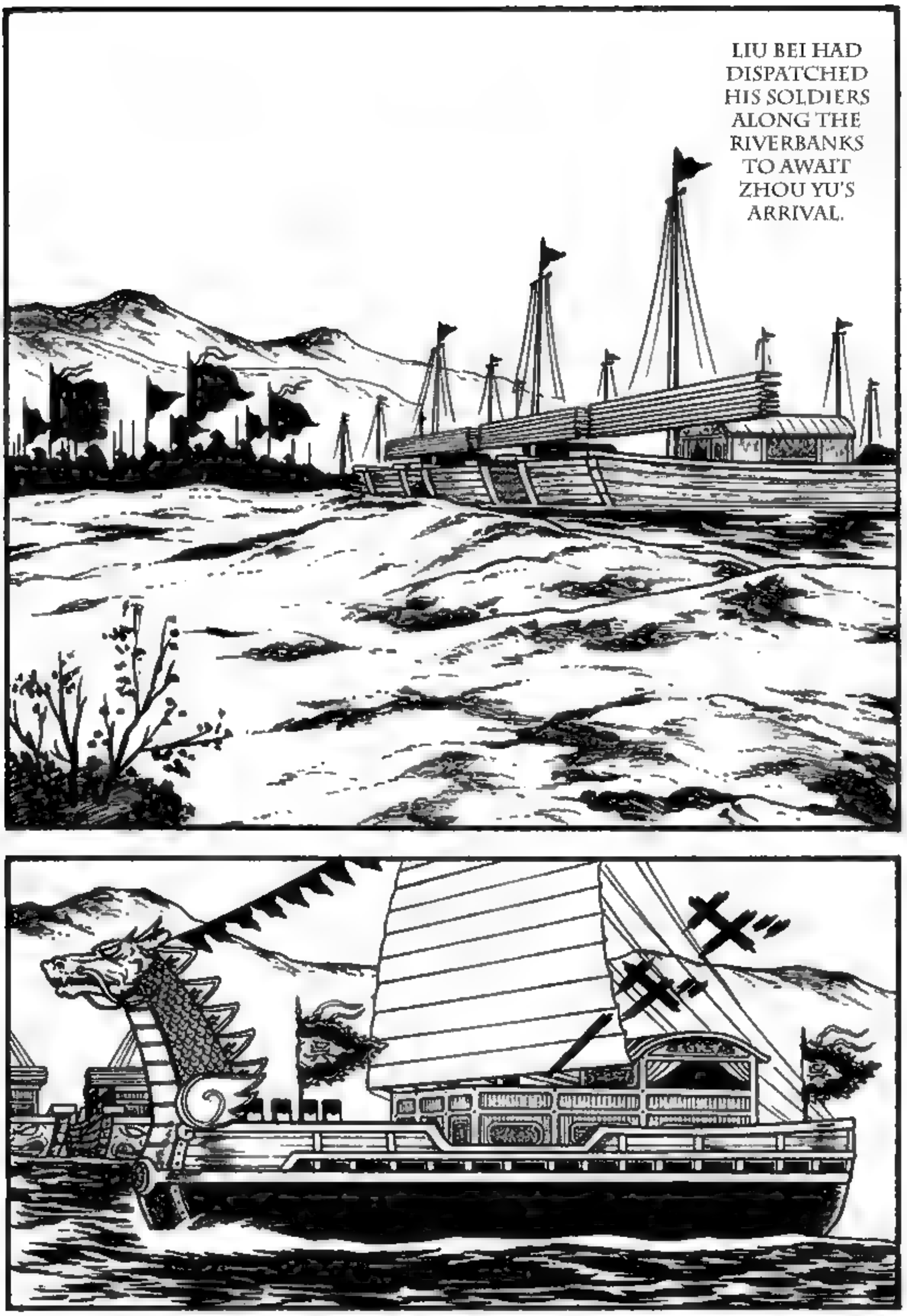
WORRY NOT, MY LORD. HE'S MERELY COMING TO GAUGE OUR MOVEMENTS.

DO YOU SUPPOSE HE'LL THREATEN US BY FORCE?

ALL MY LORD HAS TO DO IS TO SAY THIS TO ZHOU YU DURING THE BANQUET...

WHISPER WHISPER


SHORTLY THEREAFTER,
ZHOU YU CAME TO YOUKOU, ESCORTED BY 3000 SOLDIERS.

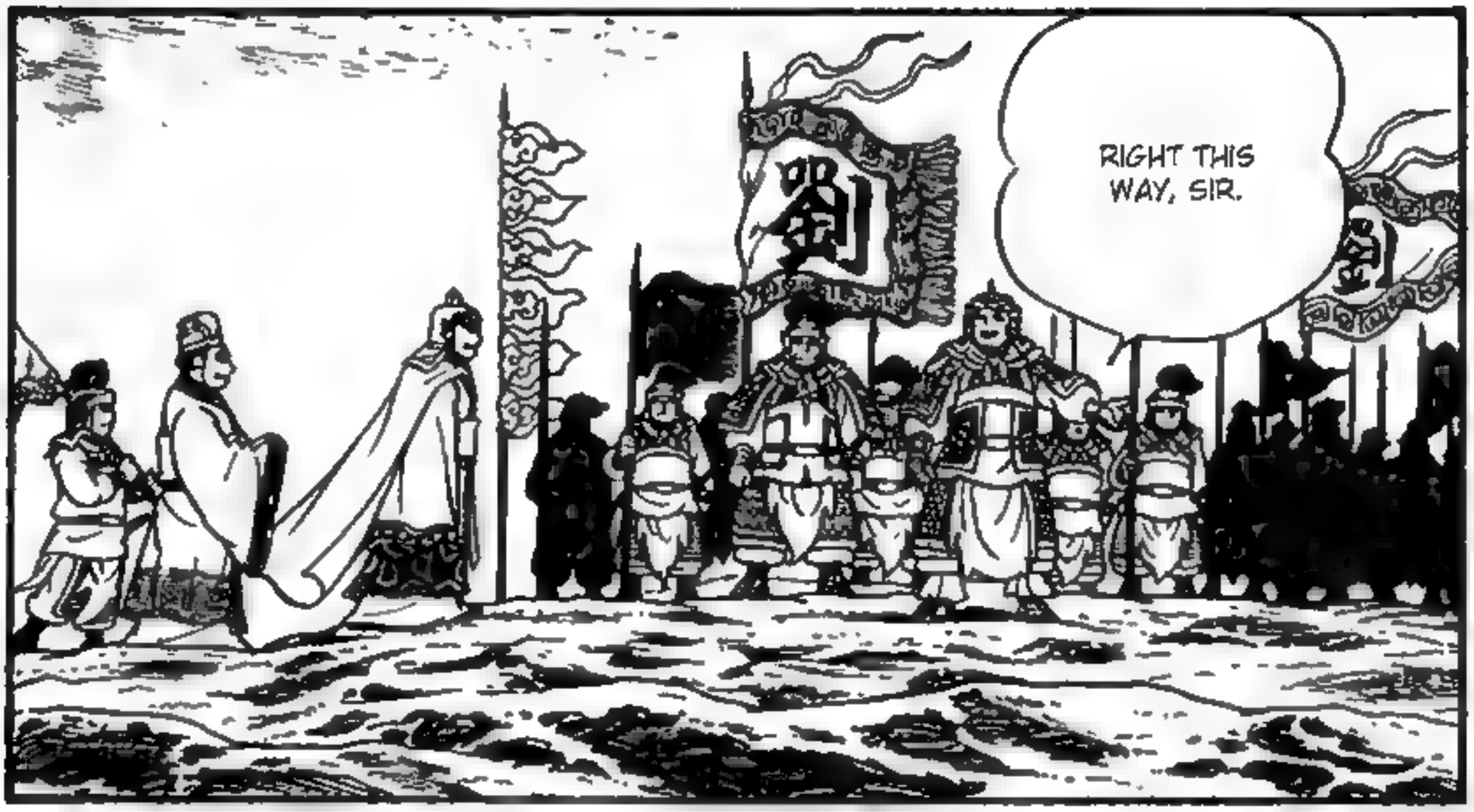

LIU BEI HAD DISPATCHED HIS SOLDIERS ALONG THE RIVERBANKS TO AWAIT ZHOU YU'S ARRIVAL.

I FULLY AGREE.

LIU BEI'S FORCES ARE DEFINITELY NOT TO BE TAKEN LIGHTLY, LU SU.

HM...

WELCOME, COMMANDER ZHOU. MY LORD HAS BEEN EAGERLY WAITING FOR YOUR ARRIVAL.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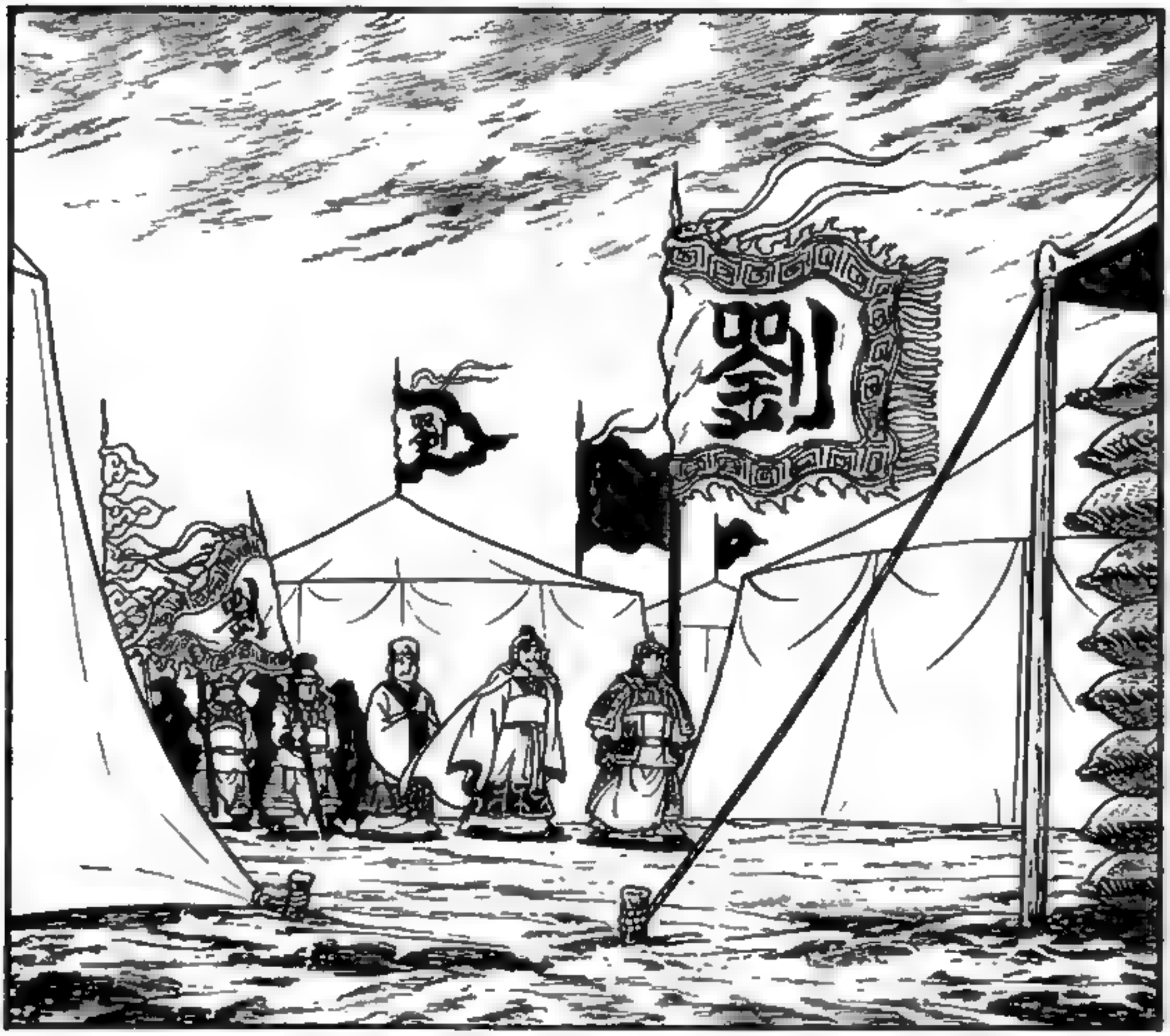
RIGHT THIS WAY, SIR.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YOU HUMBLE ME WITH YOUR PRESENCE, COMMANDER.

THANK YOU FOR THE GIFTS YOU SENT ME PREVIOUSLY. I APPRECIATE IT VERY MUCH.

PLEASE COME INSIDE. IT MAY NOT BE MUCH, BUT I HAVE FOOD AND DRINKS PREPARED.

I REALLY CANNOT STOP MARVELLING AT YOUR BRILLIANT VICTORY AT RED CLIFFS.

TO CHAIN THE ENEMY FLEET AND BURN THEM IN ONE FELL SWOOP... SIMPLY AN AMAZING TACTIC!

IN ANY CASE, I ASSUME YOU INTEND TO USE THIS CHANCE TO DRIVE CAO CAO'S FORCES COMPLETELY AWAY FROM THE SOUTH, CORRECT?

YOU GIVE ME TOO MUCH CREDIT. IT WAS ONLY POSSIBLE DUE TO OUR COOPERATION.

BUT IF YOU HAVE NO DESIRE TO TAKE NANJUN, THEN I WAS WONDERING IF I SHOULD CONQUER IT MYSELF...

FOR YOU SEE, I'VE MOBILIZED MY ARMY HERE AT YOUKOU TO ASSIST YOU IN THAT TASK.

THOUGH I APPRECIATE YOUR OFFER TO HELP, NANJUN IS PRACTICALLY WITHIN MY GRASP ALREADY AND I'M SURE I CAN TAKE IT ON MY OWN.

NO, NOT AT ALL. WU HAS ALWAYS DESIRED TO BRING NOT ONLY NANJUN BUT ALL OF JINGZHOU UNDER ITS CONTROL.

PERHAPS, BUT TO COUNT CHICKENS BEFORE THEY HATCH CAN BE RISKY.

CAO CAO MAY HAVE RETREATED TO XUCHANG BUT HE LEFT HIS FIERCE GENERAL CAO REN IN CHARGE TO GUARD THE SOUTHERN FRONT.

HAHA. WELL, I SUPPOSE IF I SHOULD FAIL, YOU ARE WELCOME TO TRY.

IS THAT SO? THEN LET'S HAVE LU SU AND KONGMING HERE BEAR WITNESS TO YOUR PROMISE.

YOU PROMISE NOT TO GO BACK ON THOSE WORDS NO MATTER WHAT?

NO NEED FOR THAT. YOU HAVE MY WORD.

AS EXPECTED OF YOUR GREAT AND NOBLE REPUTATION, COMMANDER ZHOU YU.

OF COURSE! ON MY HONOUR!

IT IS ONLY PROPER THAT WU SHOULD ATTACK JINGZHOU AND ITS COMMANDERIES FIRST. BUT AS YOU PROMISED, MY LORD SHALL INTERVENE IF THE TASK PROVES TOO CHALLENGING.

NOW THEN... LU SU, I BELIEVE WE SHOULD GET GOING.

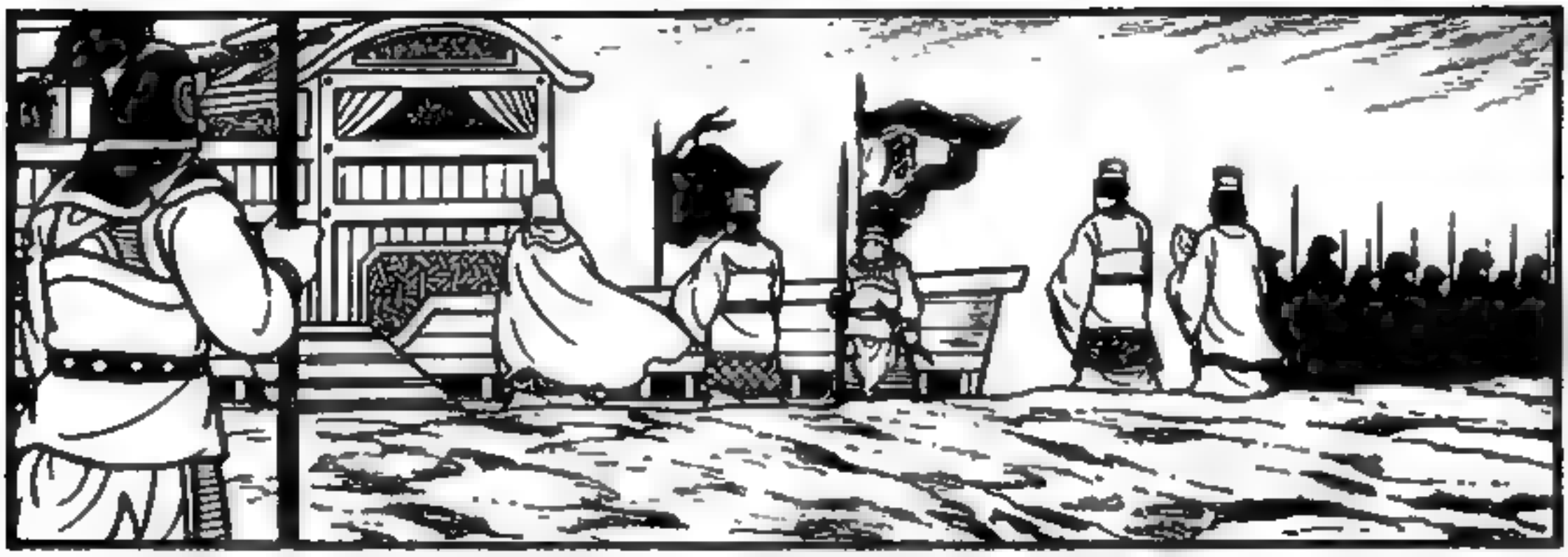
WELL SAID, KONGMING.

AS MUCH AS I'D LIKE TO STAY A LITTLE LONGER, A COMMANDER CANNOT LEAVE HIS BASE FOR TOO LONG IN WARTIME.

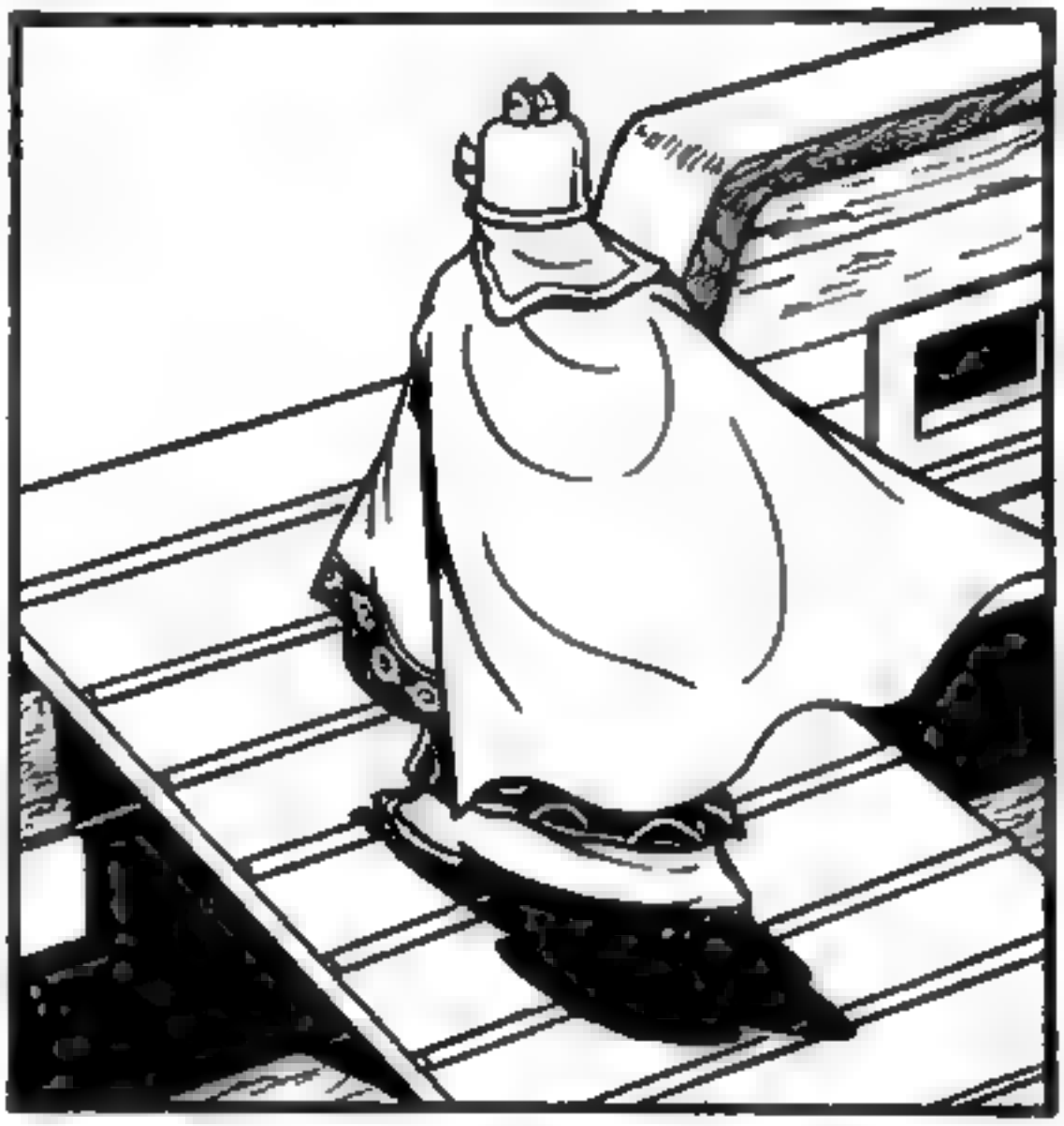
ALREADY? BUT YOU ONLY JUST ARRIVED.

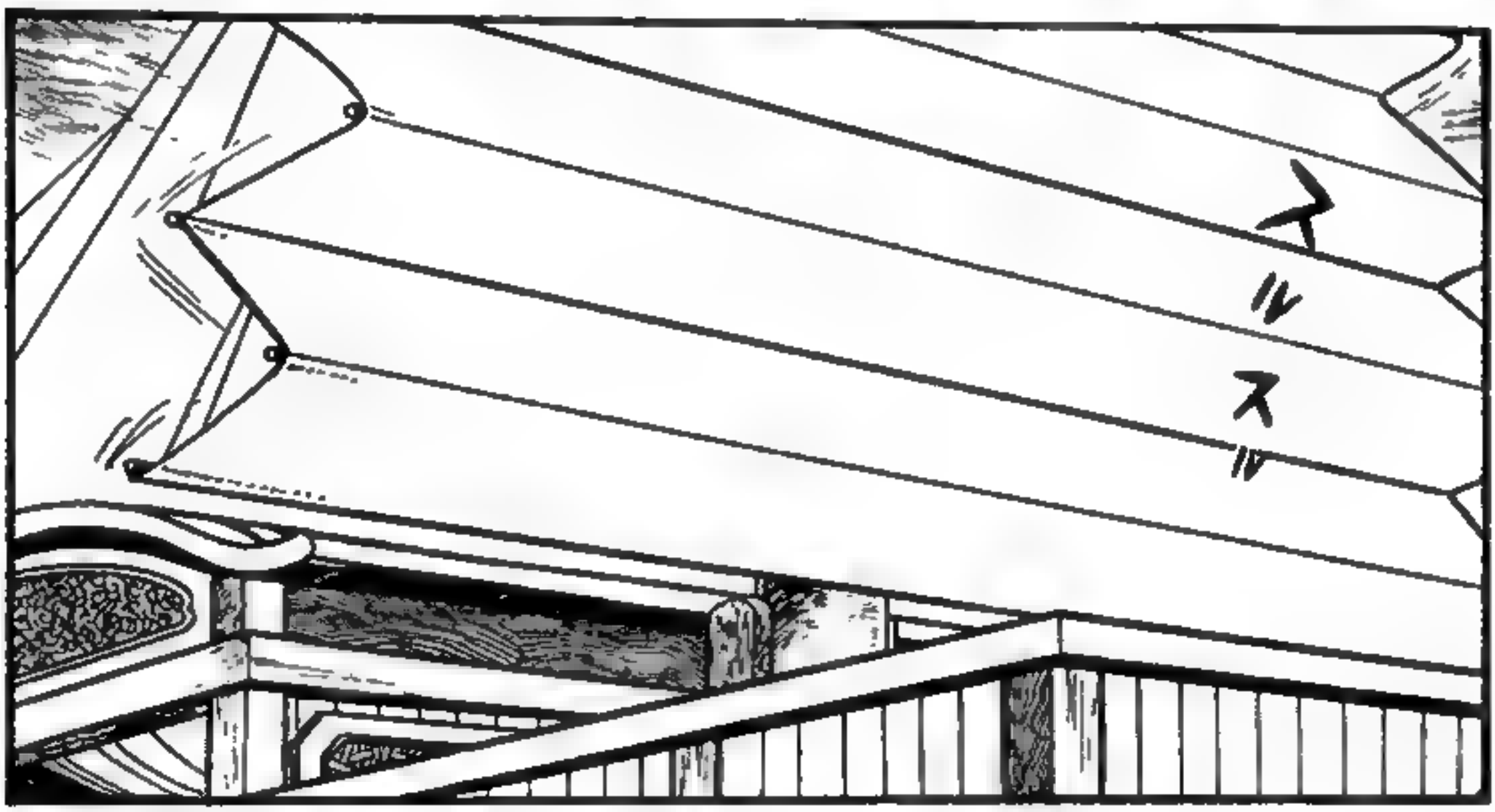
NO, THE PLEASURE WAS ALL MINE.

IT WAS A PLEASURE SEEING YOU.



RAISE THE SAILS!





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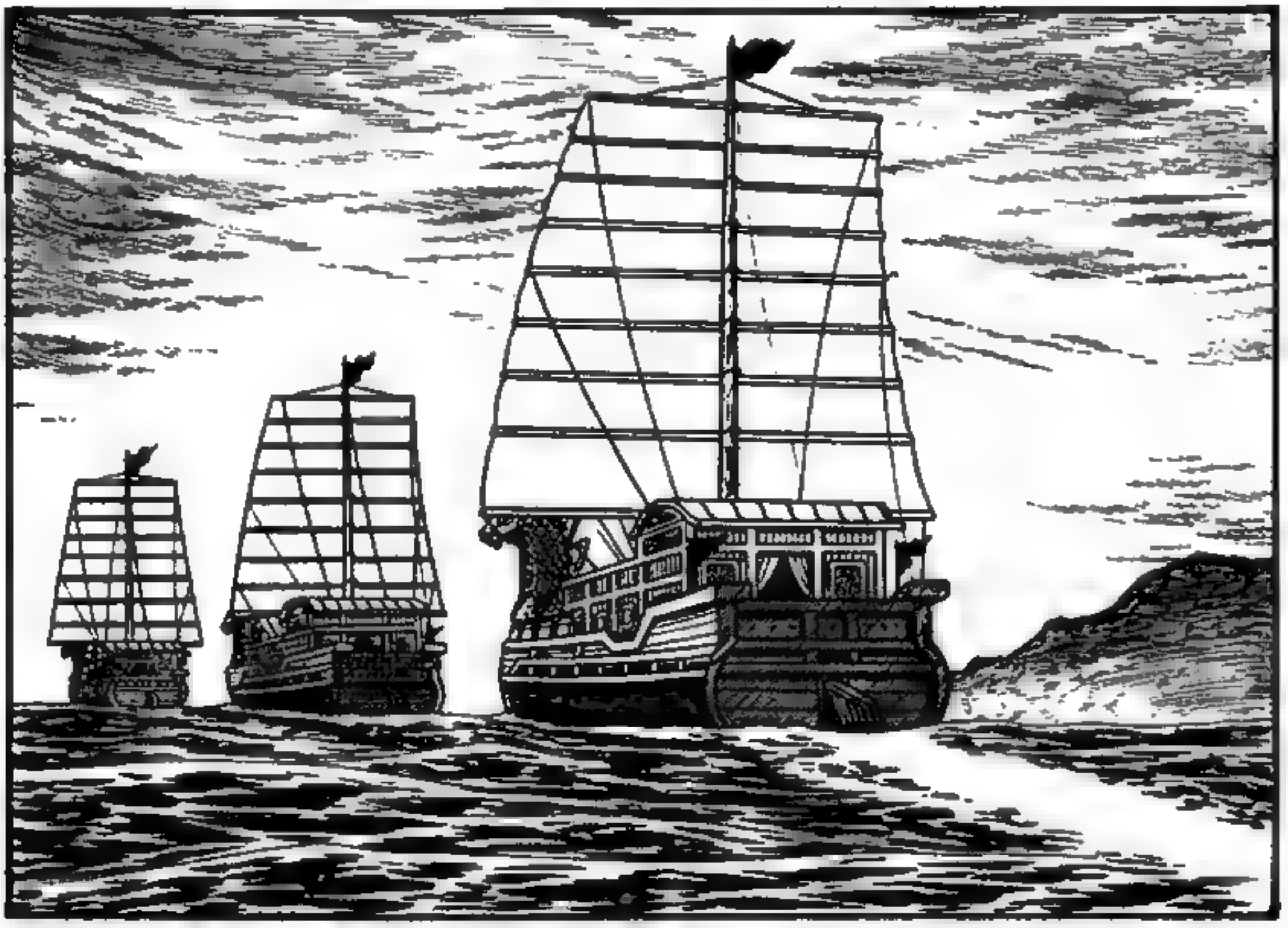
IT WAS JUST A WHIM.

WHY DID YOU SAY LIU BEI COULD TAKE NANJUN FOR HIMSELF BACK THERE?

WITH THE MOMENTUM FROM OUR VICTORY AT RED CLIFFS, OUR TROOPS CAN EASILY TAKE NANJUN. WE CANNOT FAIL.

.....

HENCE, THE PROMISE I MADE ENSURES THAT LIU BEI WILL KEEP OUT OF NANJUN.



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AFTER TELLING ME TO SAY ALL THOSE THINGS, IN THE END, ALL WE HAVE TO SHOW FOR IT IS TO SIT BY AND WATCH AS ZHOU YU TAKES OVER NANJUN.

WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS, KONGMING?

PREVIOUSLY, WHEN I ADVISED MY LORD TO TAKE OVER JINGZHOU, YOU DECLINED TO ACT.

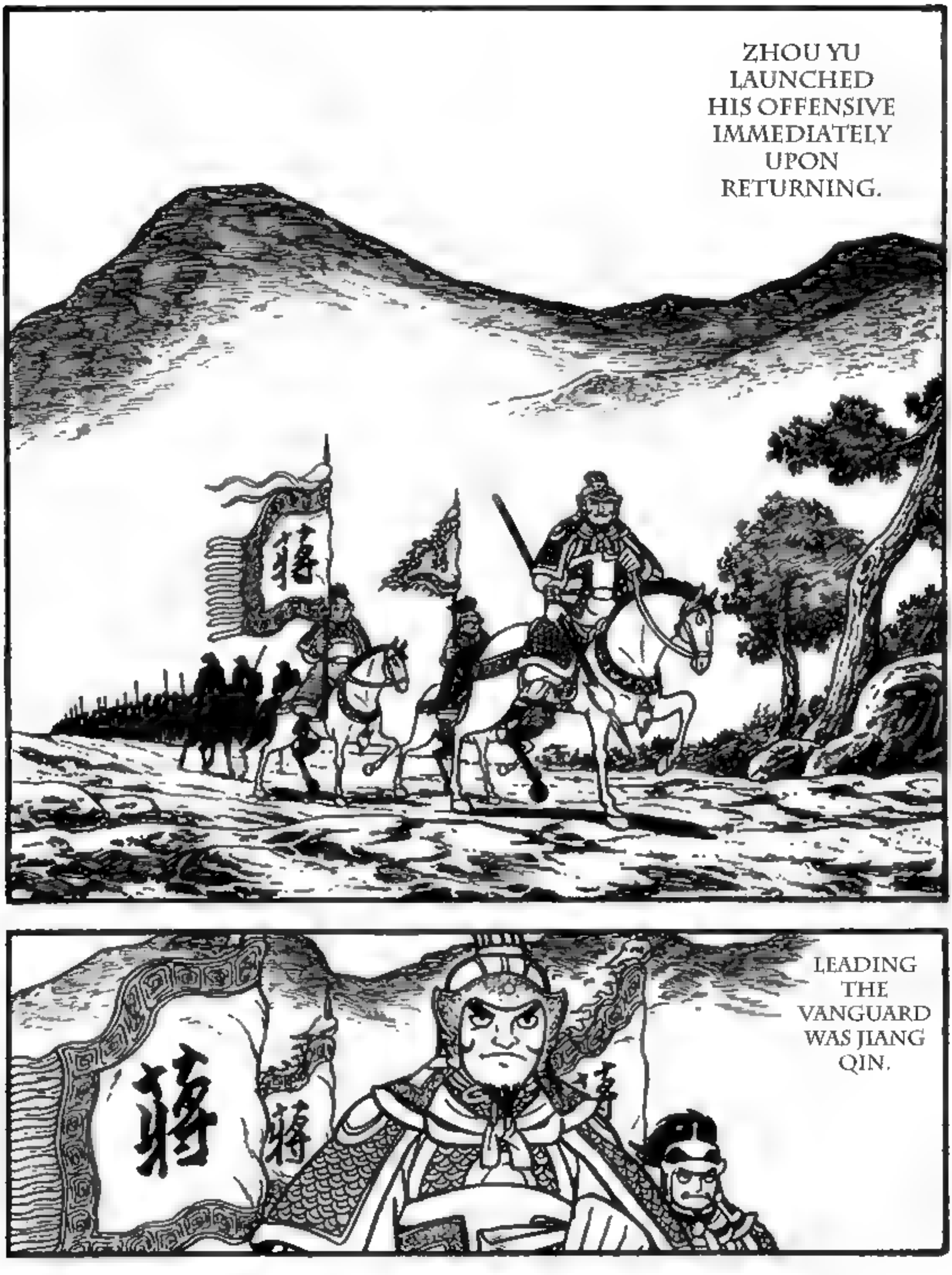
BUT THINGS ARE DIFFERENT NOW. JINGZHOU IS NOW OWNED BY CAO CAO AND WE DESPARATELY NEED LAND TO USE AS A BASE OF OPERATIONS.

THAT WAS ONLY BECAUSE OF MY RELATION WITH LIU BIAO.

YES, YES. I KNOW VERY WELL.

WORRY NOT, MY LORD. THIS IS ALL WITHIN MY PLANS TO BRING NANJUN UNDER YOUR SOLE CONTROL IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

WU BLUNDERS

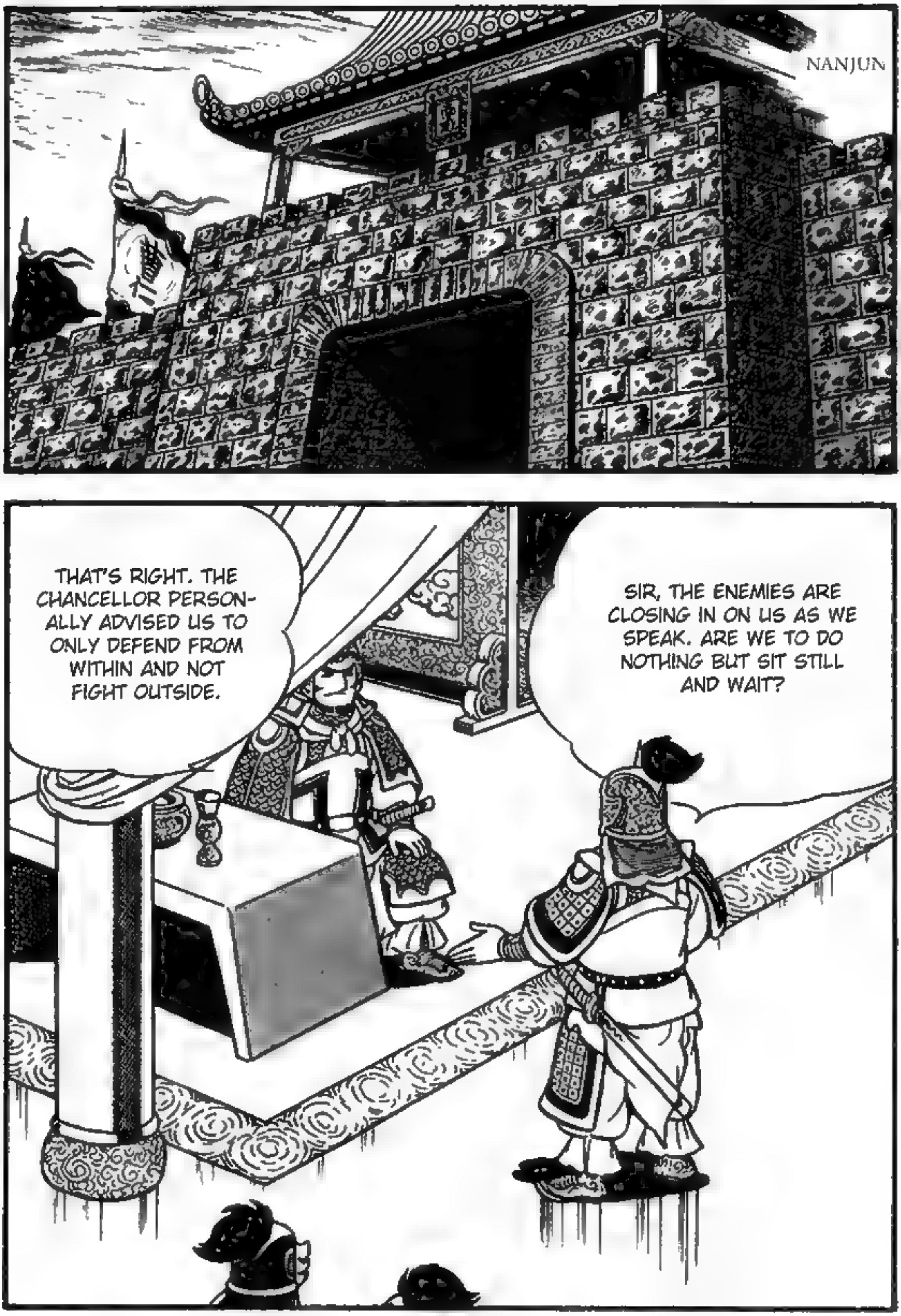

ZHOU YU LAUNCHED HIS OFFENSIVE IMMEDIATELY UPON RETURNING.
蔣
蔣
LEADING THE VANGUARD WAS JIANG QIN.

AND XU SHENG.

ASSISTING HIM WAS DING FENG.

TOGETHER, THEY COMMANDED 5000 SOLDIERS.

WHILE THE BULK OF THE ARMY LED BY ZHOU YU FOLLOWED SHORTLY BEHIND.


NANJUN
THAT'S RIGHT. THE CHANCELLOR PERSONALLY ADVISED US TO ONLY DEFEND FROM WITHIN AND NOT FIGHT OUTSIDE.
SIR, THE ENEMIES ARE CLOSING IN ON US AS WE SPEAK. ARE WE TO DO NOTHING BUT SIT STILL AND WAIT?

HMM... YOU DO MAKE A VALID POINT.

PLEASE SIR, ALLOW ME TO LEAD AT LEAST A SINGLE ENGAGEMENT OUTSIDE THE CITY WALLS TO RAISE THE MEN'S MORALE.

AS THE SAYING GOES, "NO CASTLE IS TRULY IMPREGNABLE." I FEAR WE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO DEFEND AGAINST THE ONCOMING ONSLAUGHT BY MERELY WAITING HERE, ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF THE TROOPS' POOR MORALE FROM THE DISASTER AT RED CLIFFS.

THANK YOU, GENERAL CAO REN.

PERMISSION GRANTED, NIU JIN. I SHALL GIVE YOU 500 VETERAN SOLDIERS FOR YOUR TASK.

HM?

* THE FLAGS IN THE TOP PANELS READ JIANG (蔣) FOR JIANG QIN WHILE THE ONE IN THE BOTTOM READS NIU (牛) FOR NIU JIN

HA, SPOKEN LIKE A TRUE STUBBORN BOAR.

I, NIU JIN, CHALLENGE THE ENEMY LEADER TO SINGLE-COMBAT! SHOW YOURSELF!

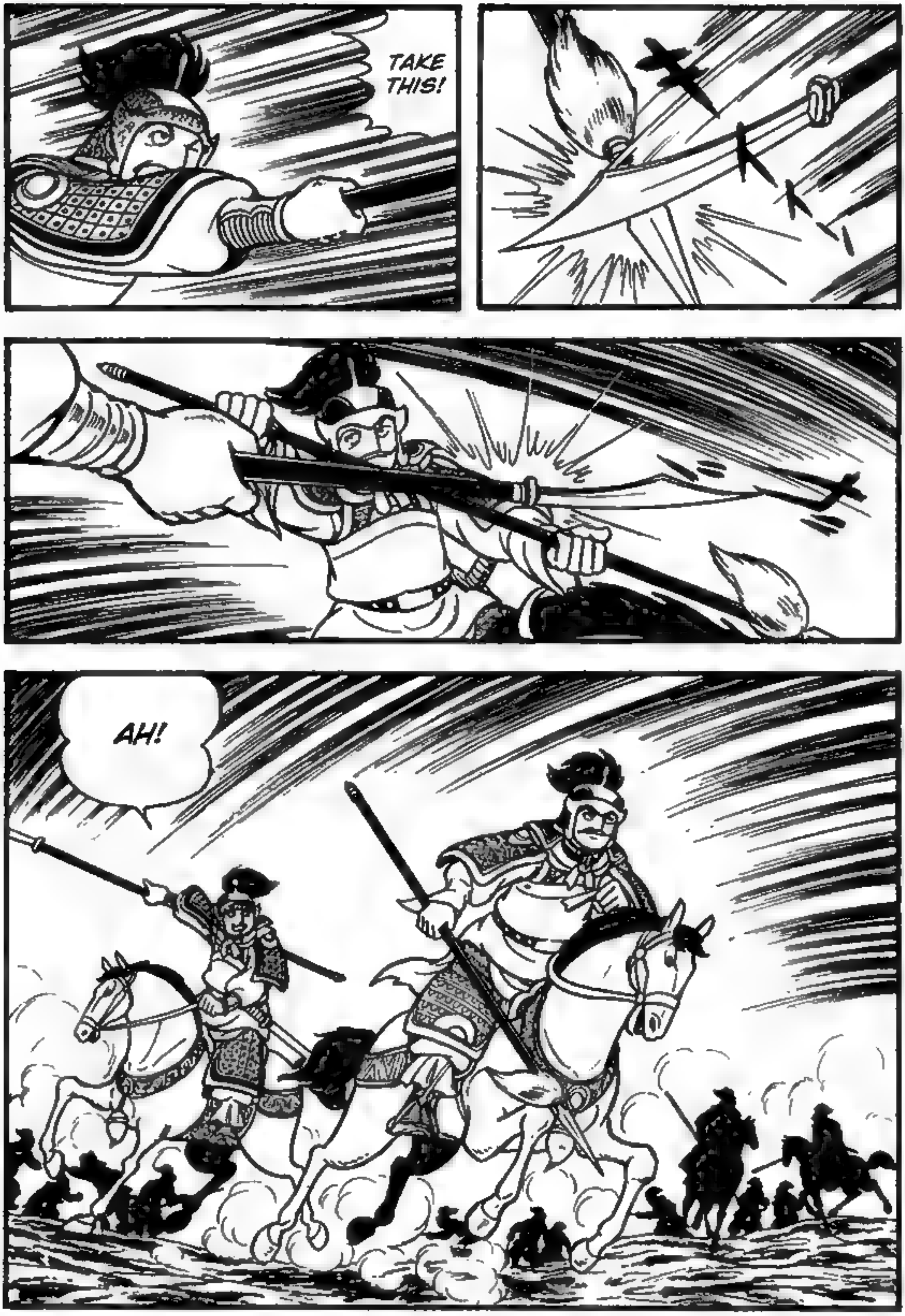
CHALLENGING OUR 5000 SOLDIERS WITH ONLY A FEW HUNDRED IS ONLY PROOF OF YOUR STUBBORN RECKLESSNESS. ALLOW THIS DING FENG TO TEACH YOU A LESSON IN MODESTY!

COME AT ME THEN!

HAH!

TALK WHILE YOU CAN!

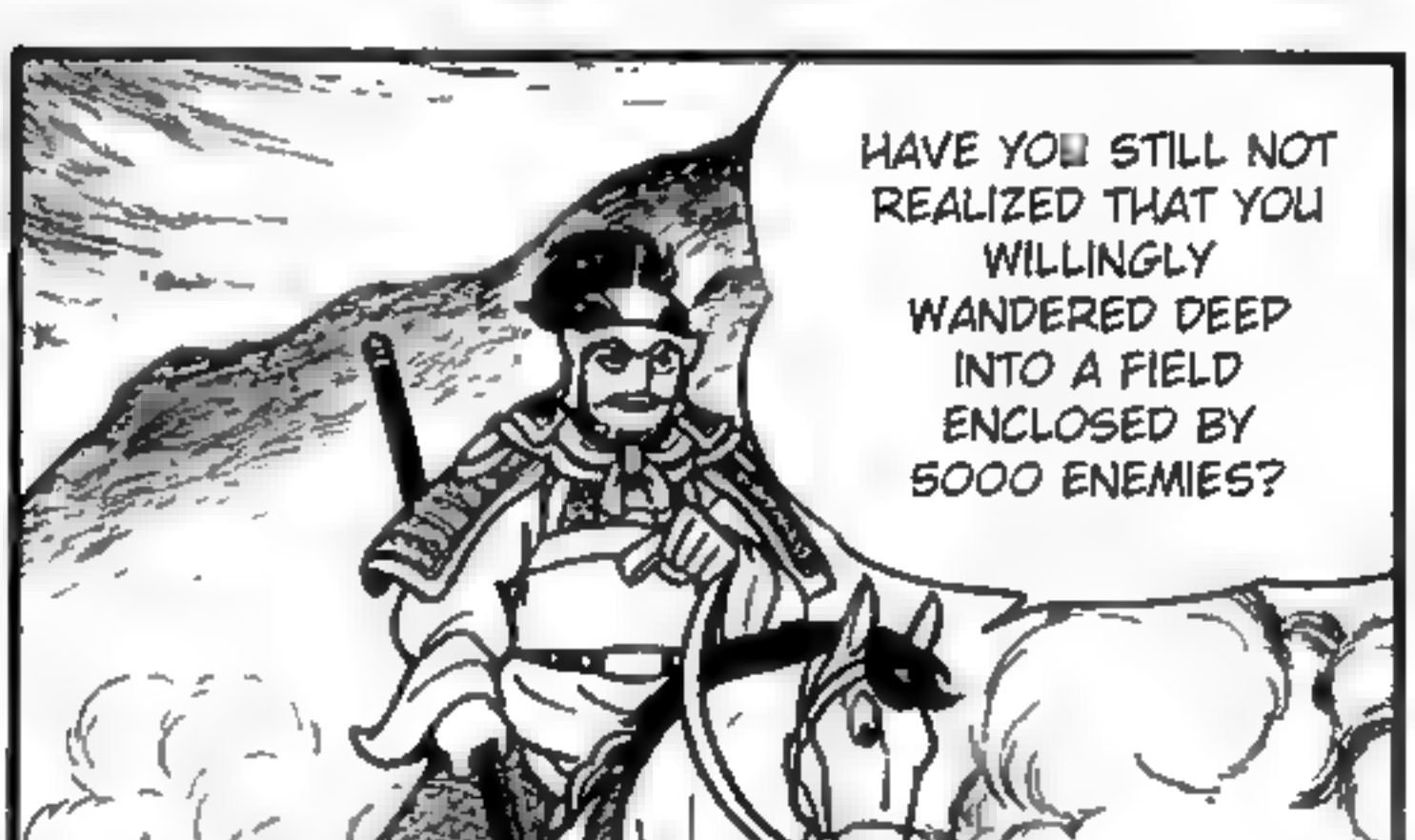
AS EXPECTED OF A BOAR TO HAVE AT LEAST THIS MUCH STRENGTH.


TAKE THIS!
AH!

I WON'T LET YOU ESCAPE!
牛
牛
STOP RIGHT THERE, DING FENG!
牛

HAHA, THIS IS EXACTLY WHY I CALL YOU A BOAR.

TAKE A LOOK AROUND YOU!


HAVE YOU STILL NOT REALIZED THAT YOU WILLINGLY WANDERED DEEP INTO A FIELD ENCLOSED BY 5000 ENEMIES?

RETREAT!

AGHH! I'VE STRAYED TOO DEEP!

DON'T LET A SINGLE ENEMY RETURN INSIDE THEIR WALLS!

IT'S TOO LATE FOR THAT!

CURSES!

GAHH!

OPEN THE GATES! WE'RE GOING OUT TO RESCUE THEM!

NOT GOOD... NIU JIN'S GOT HIMSELF COMPLETELY SURROUNDED...!

BUT NIU JIN'S FAR TOO IMPORTANT TO LOSE, AS IS OUR 500 VETERAN SOLDIERS FIGHTING ALONG WITH HIM. TO STAND BY AND WATCH THEM DIE WILL ONLY SPELL OUR OWN DOOM AS WELL.

I KNOW.
BUT SIR! THE CHANCELLOR SPECIFICALLY ORDERED US TO STAY BEHIND OUR CITY WALLS!

OPEN THE GATES!

JUST FOLLOW MY LEAD.

LET US MEET THEM HEAD-ON!

徐

LOOK! THERE'RE MORE ENEMIES COMING OUT FROM THEIR WALLS!

MOVE OUT OF THE WAY IF YOU VALUE YOUR LIVES!

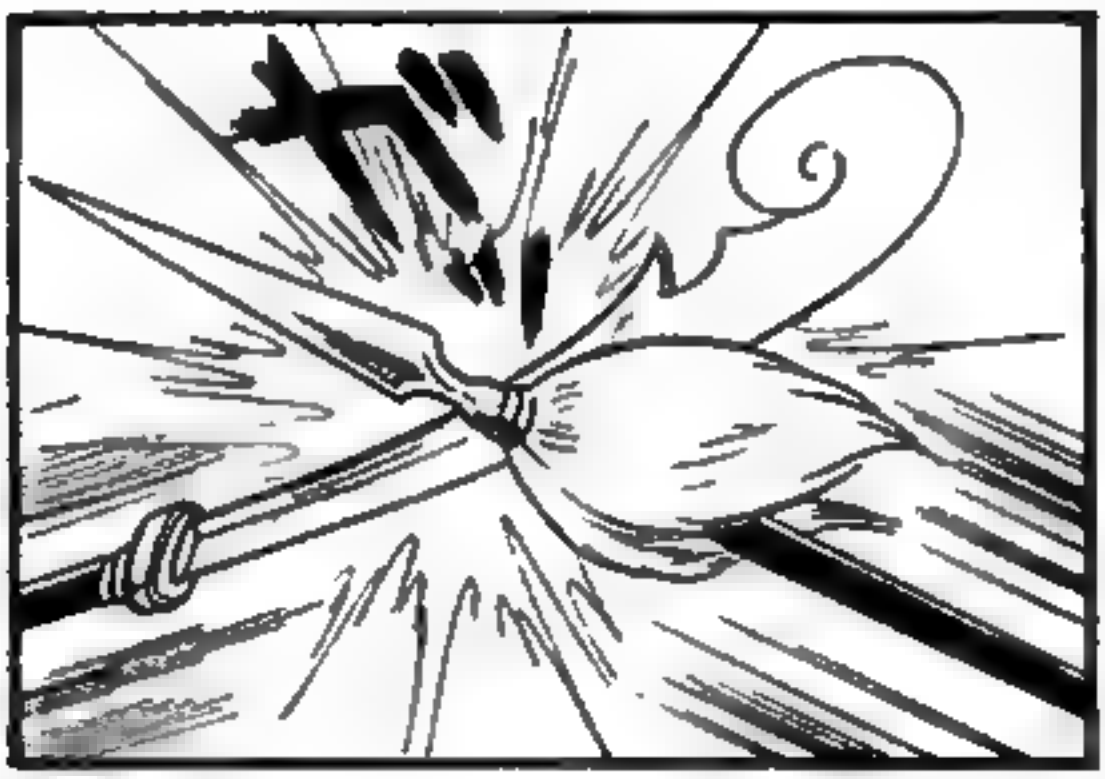
GENERAL!

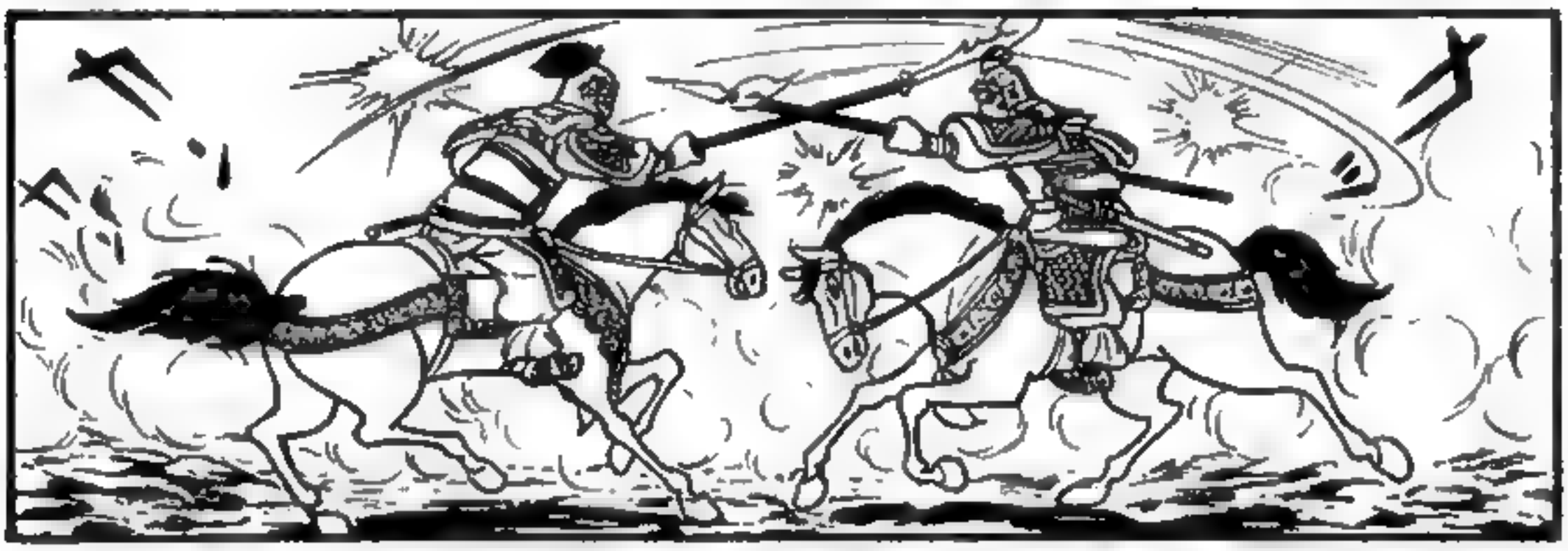
NIU JIN! I'VE COME TO RESCUE YOU!

YES, SIR!

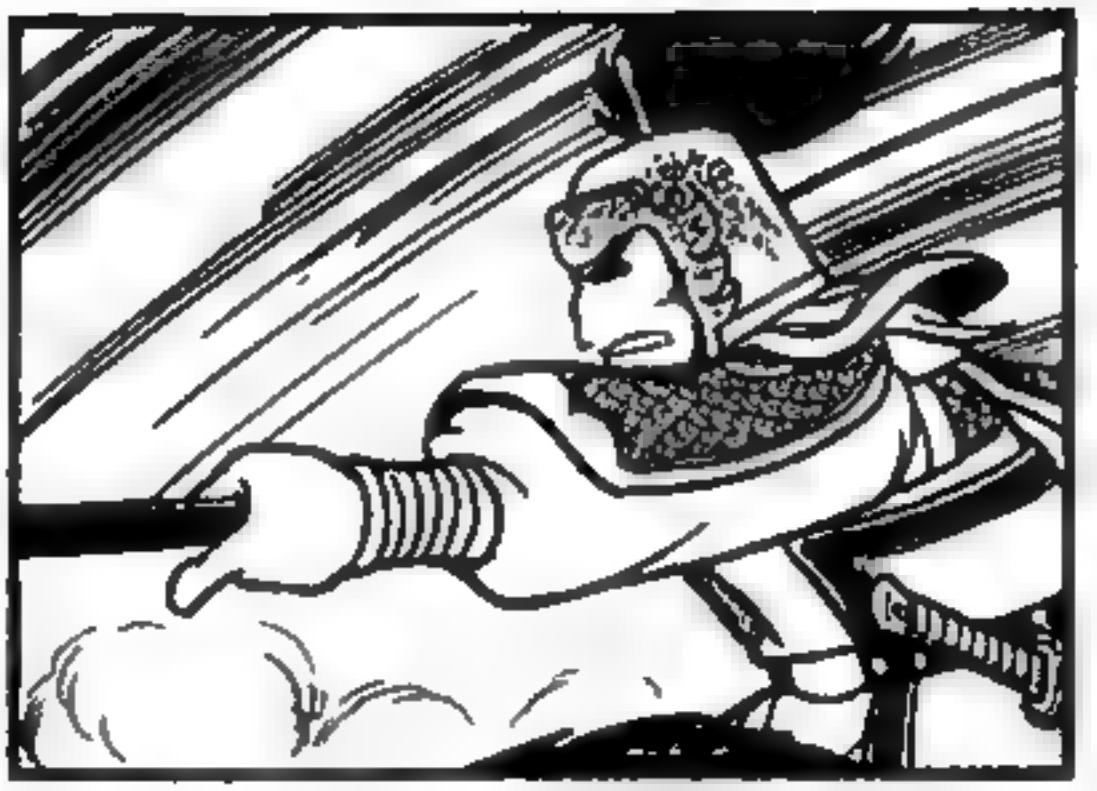
NOW LET US QUICKLY RETREAT BACK INSIDE THE WALLS.

RETREAT!
STOP RIGHT THERE!
DON'T PUSH YOUR LUCK.





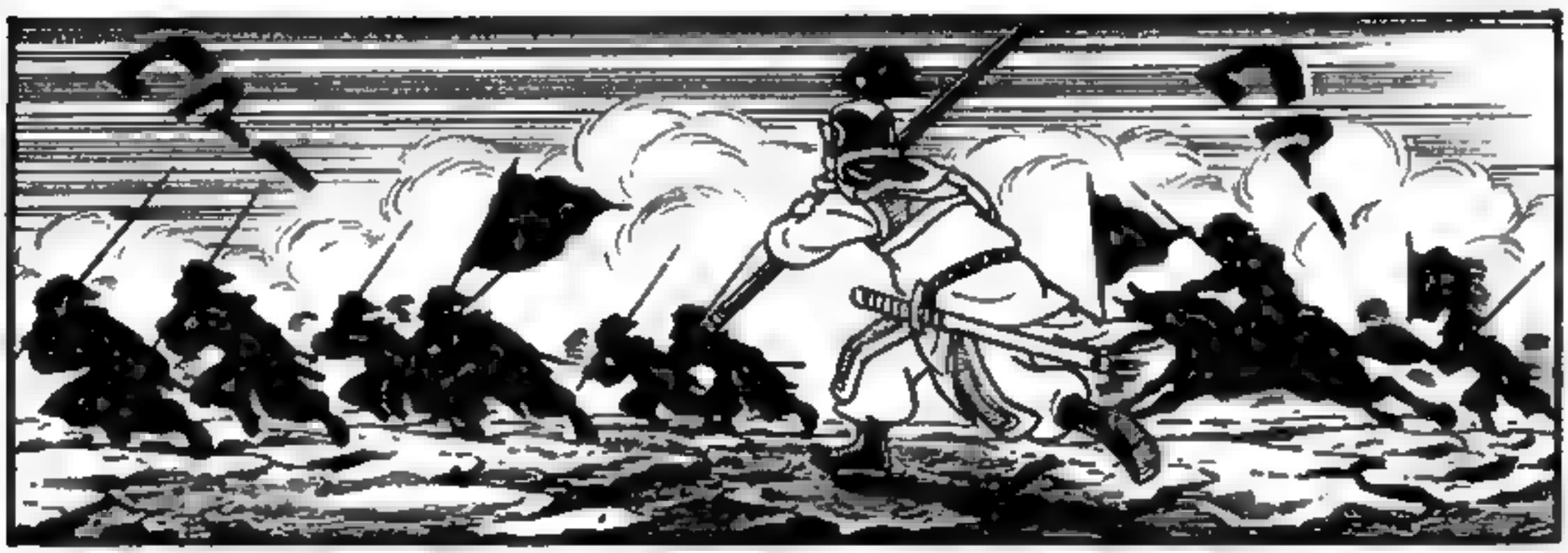
AS YOU WISH!
ALLOW ME TO HELP, GENERAL!

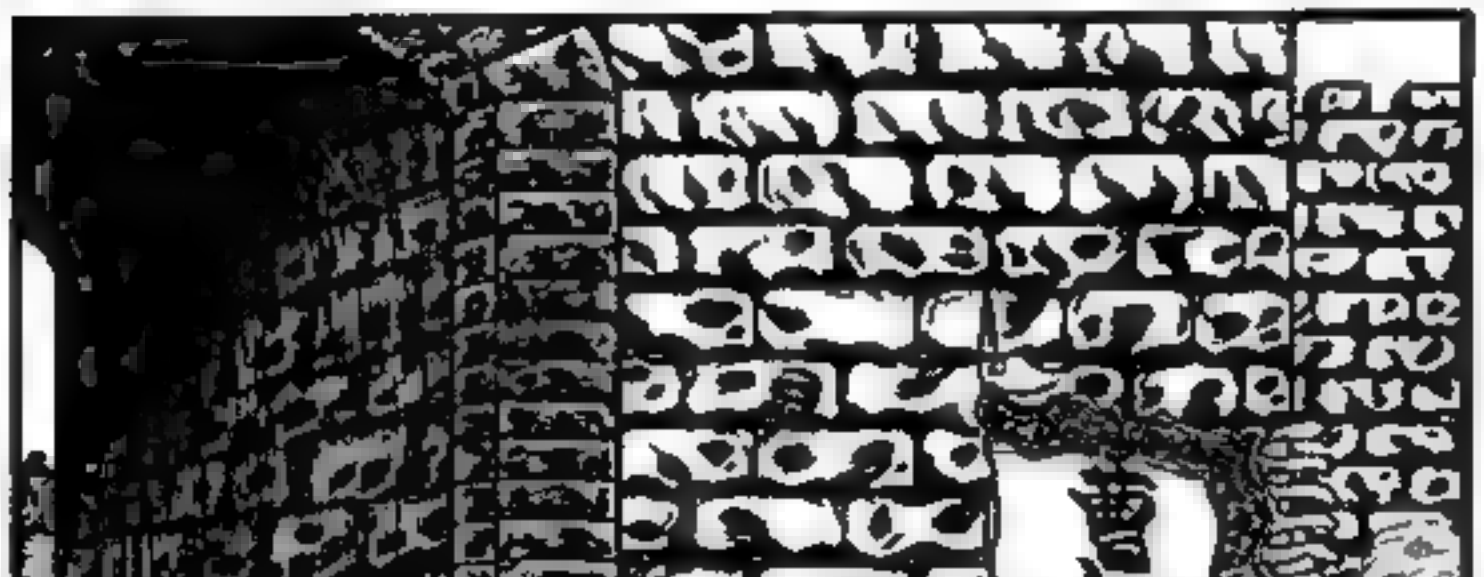


HAHAHA!
LOOK AT YOUR
GENERAL TURN
TAIL AND RUN!

蔣
AHH!

FOLLOW YOUR COWARD OF A LEADER AND GET LOST!

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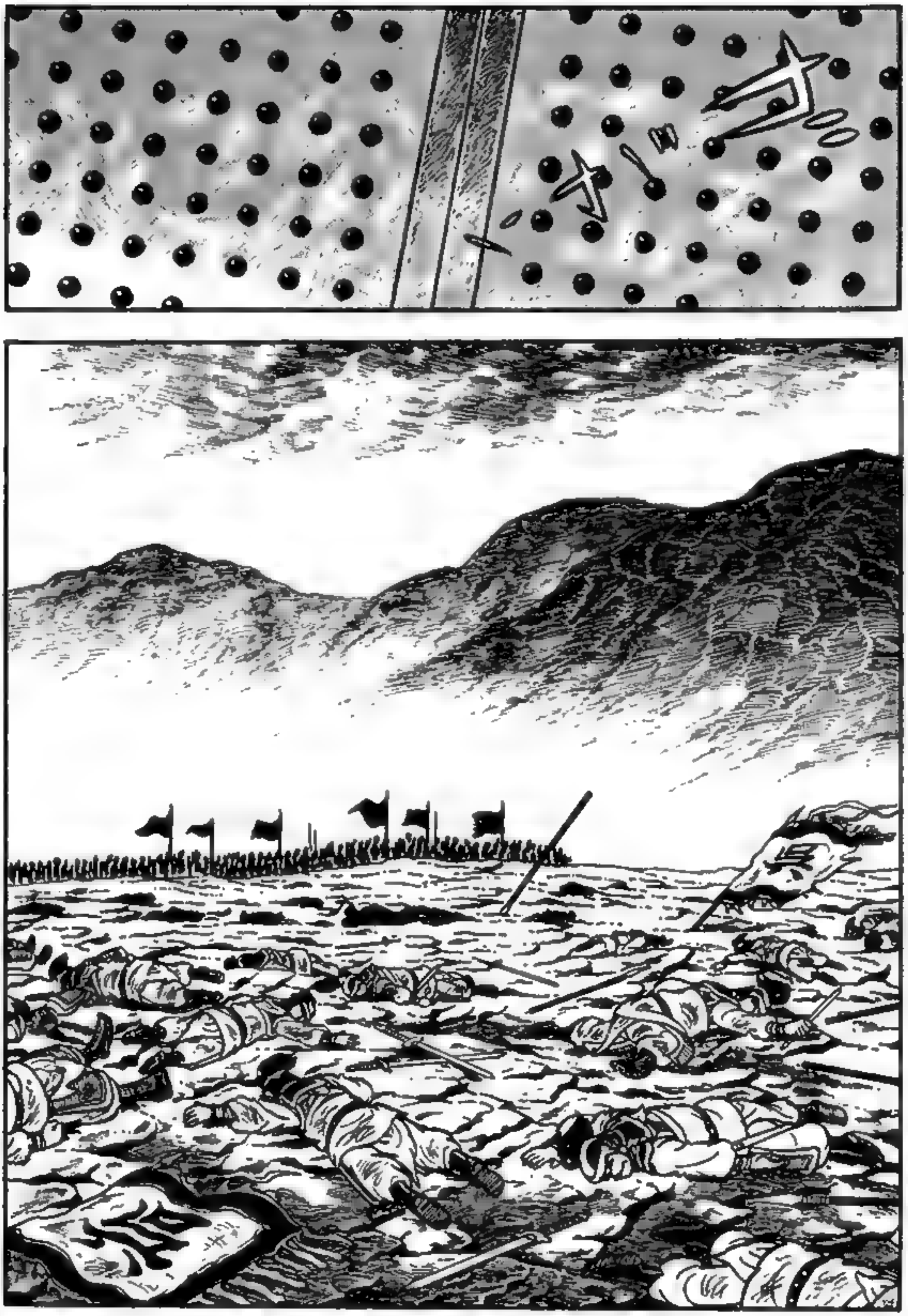
HAHA!

LET'S HEAD BACK INSIDE!

THAT'S OUR GENERAL CAO REN!

HURRAY!

CLOSE THE GATES AND TIGHTEN OUR DEFENSES!



CAPTURE OF YILING

YOU WERE DEFEATED BY A MEAGER FORCE THAT SALLIED OUT FROM THEIR WALLS DESPITE HEAVILY OUTNUMBERING THEM!?
AND YOU CALL YOURSELVES GENERALS!?

PLEASE TRY TO CALM DOWN, SIR. IT IS TOO RISKY TO HAVE OUR COMMANDER FIGHTING ON THE FRONTLINES.

I WON'T RELY ON YOUR INCOMPETENCE ANY LONGER. I SHALL PERSONALLY LEAD THE NEXT ATTACK.

IF WE FOCUS TOO MUCH ON ATTACKING NANJUN, IT'S POSSIBLE THAT THE ENEMIES AT YILING WILL STRIKE OUR REAR.

I'D ALSO LIKE TO POINT OUT THAT YILING, HELD BY CAO HONG, IS A POTENTIAL THREAT TO US.

WHAT DO YOU PROPOSE THEN?

YES, GOOD POINT...

GIVE ME 3000 TROOPS AND I SHALL CAPTURE YILING.

AND SO, GAN NING HEADED TO YILING WITH 3000 SOLDIERS

*THE FLAG (甘) READS GAN FOR GAN NING

NOT ONLY THAT, LOSING YILING WILL ONLY COMPROMISE OUR POSITION HERE AS WELL.

THAT'S DEEPLY TROUBLING. YILING IS NOT YET SET TO DEFEND AGAINST A HEAVY SIEGE.

THE ENEMIES HAVE SENT A PART OF THEIR FORCES TO YILING!?

I SUGGEST WE SEND SIR'S YOUNGER BROTHER CAO CHUN, ASSISTED BY NIU JIN, TO AID YILING.

WE MUST ACT QUICKLY THEN.

YES, SIR.

CAO CHUN, NIU JIN. DEPART FOR YILING RIGHT AWAY.

YES, GOOD IDEA.

CAO CHUN IS AT THE GATES?

YILING

YES, SIR. IT APPEARS HE'S COME FOR SOME URGENT MATTER.

I'LL MEET WITH HIM RIGHT AWAY THEN.

I'VE COME TO WARN YOU THAT ENEMIES ARE COMING HERE AS WE SPEAK.

WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE, CAO CHUN?

I'M AFRAID WE DON'T HAVE ENOUGH MEN NOR FOOD TO FEND THEM OFF...

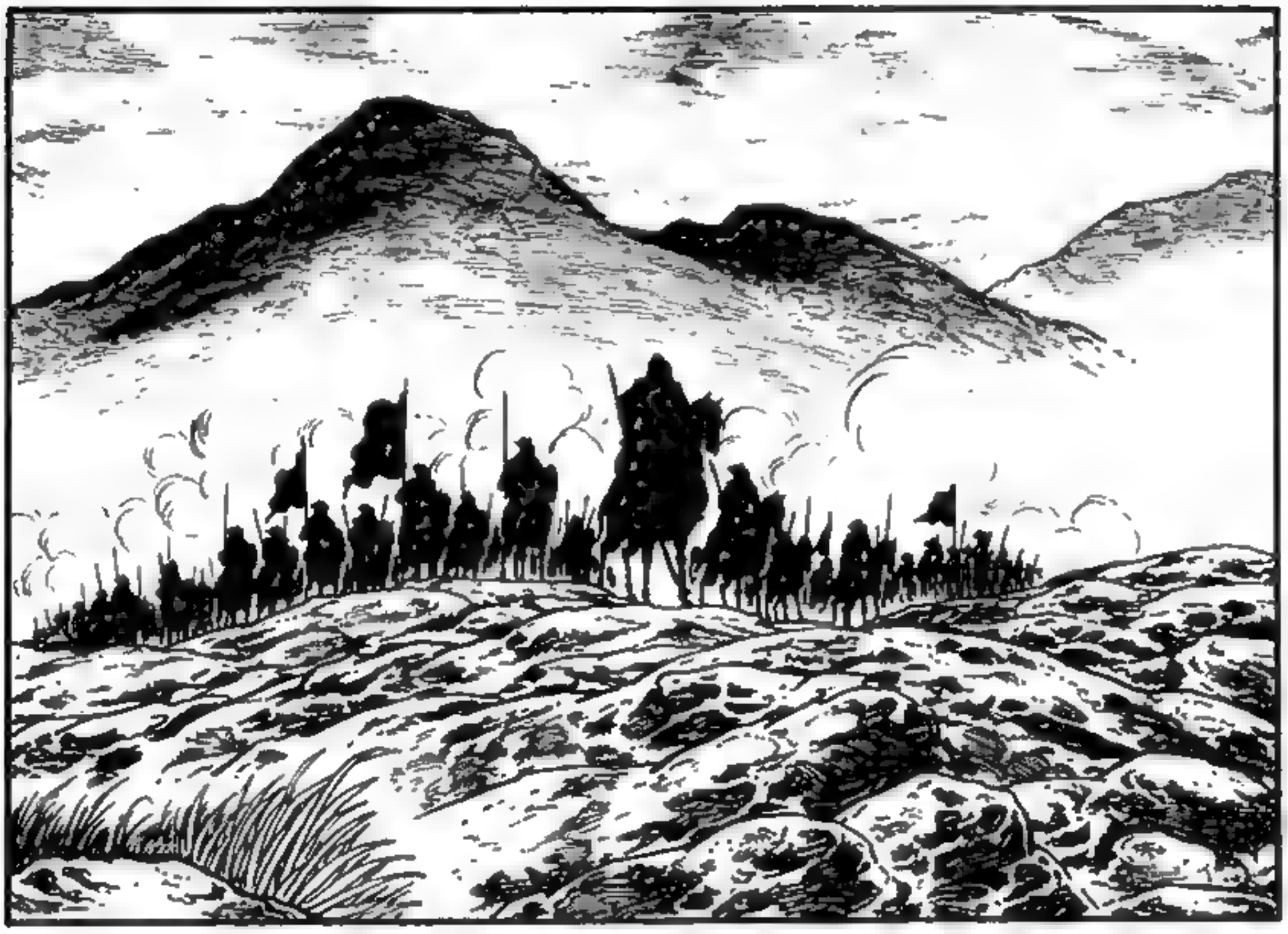
WHA!

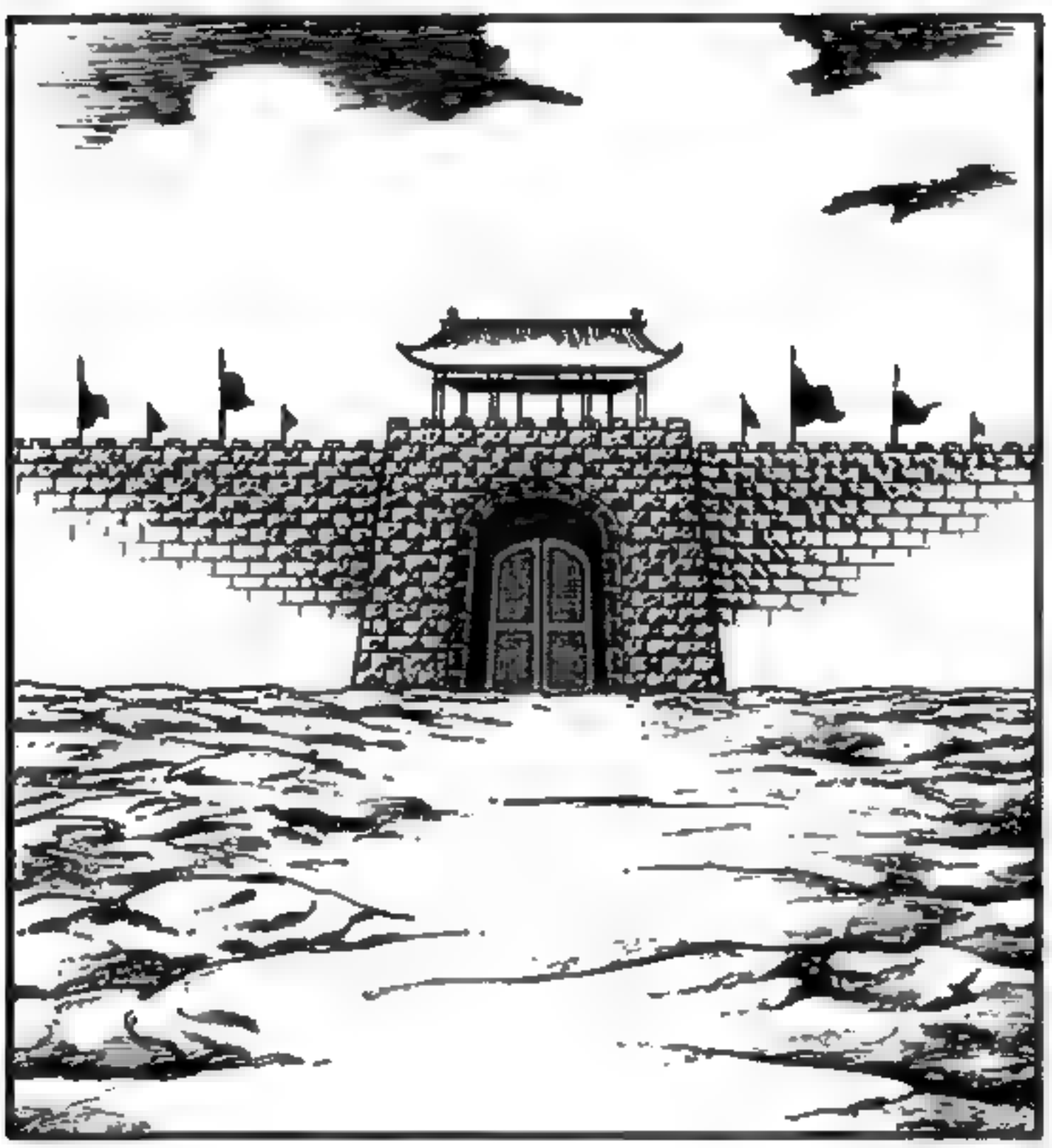
THAT'S WHY I'VE BEEN SENT TO HELP. WE CAN STILL WIN AS LONG AS WE FIGHT WITH BRAINS AND NOT BRAWNS.

THEN I'LL TAKE MY LEAVE FOR NOW.

HERE'S THE PLAN...

HMM, I SEE...





LOOK! YILING IS RIGHT BEFORE OUR EYES!

ATTACK!

IF WE CAN TAKE THIS CASTLE, THEN NANJUN IS AS GOOD AS OURS!

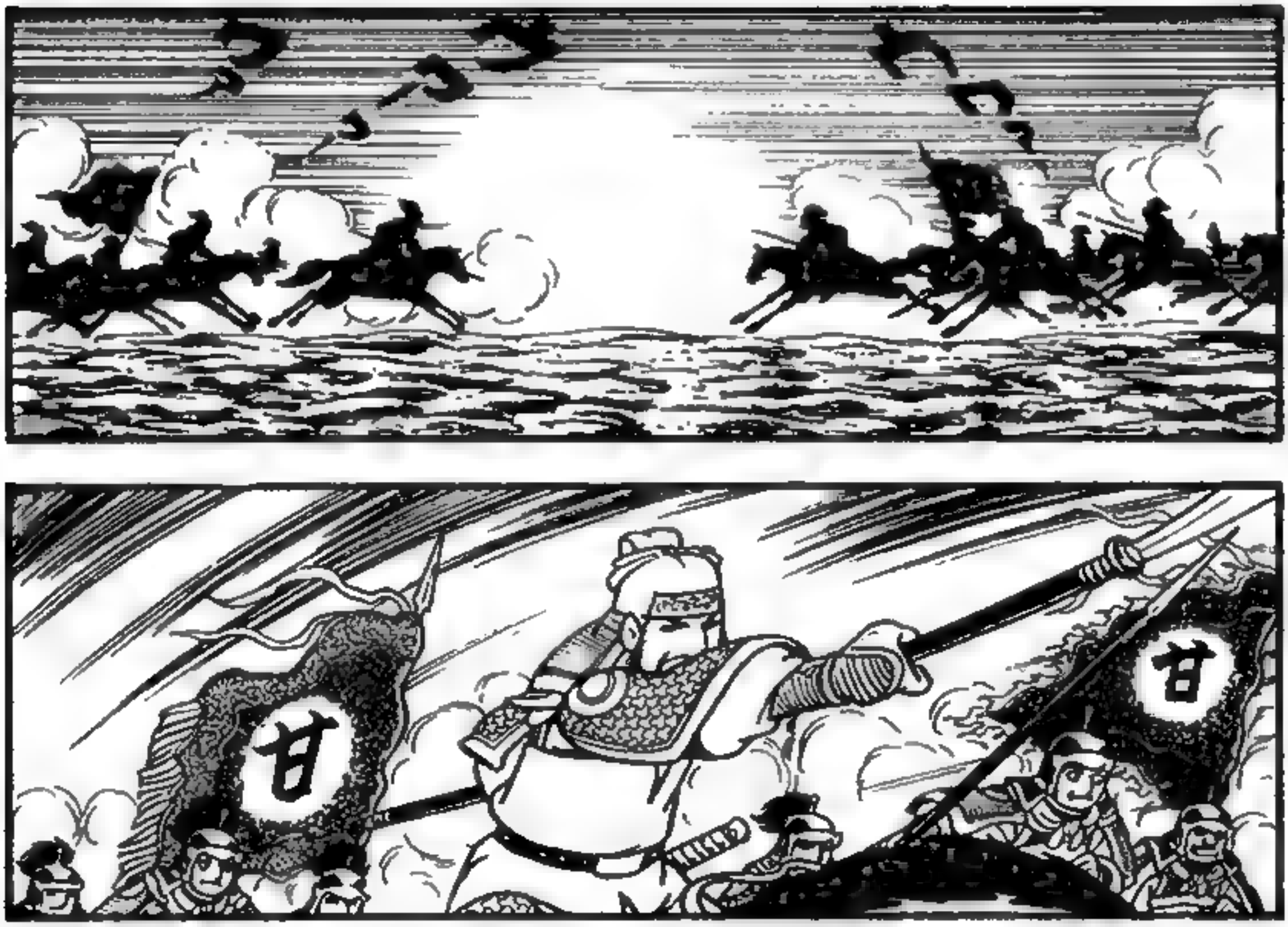
GOOD, WE'LL BE GOING OUT TO FACE THEM.

THE ENEMIES ARE HERE!

BE SURE TO FOLLOW MY ORDERS OUT THERE!

GREAT, THAT'LL MAKE THINGS EASIER!

SIR, THE ENEMIES ARE COMING OUT TO MEET US!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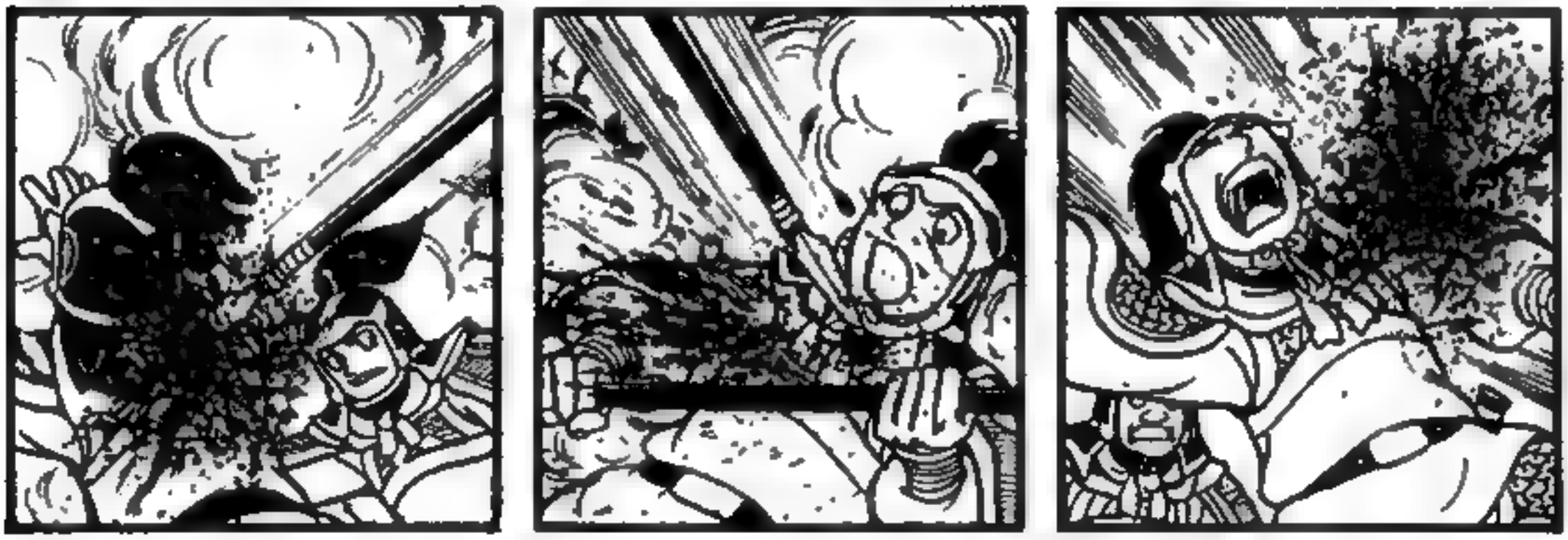
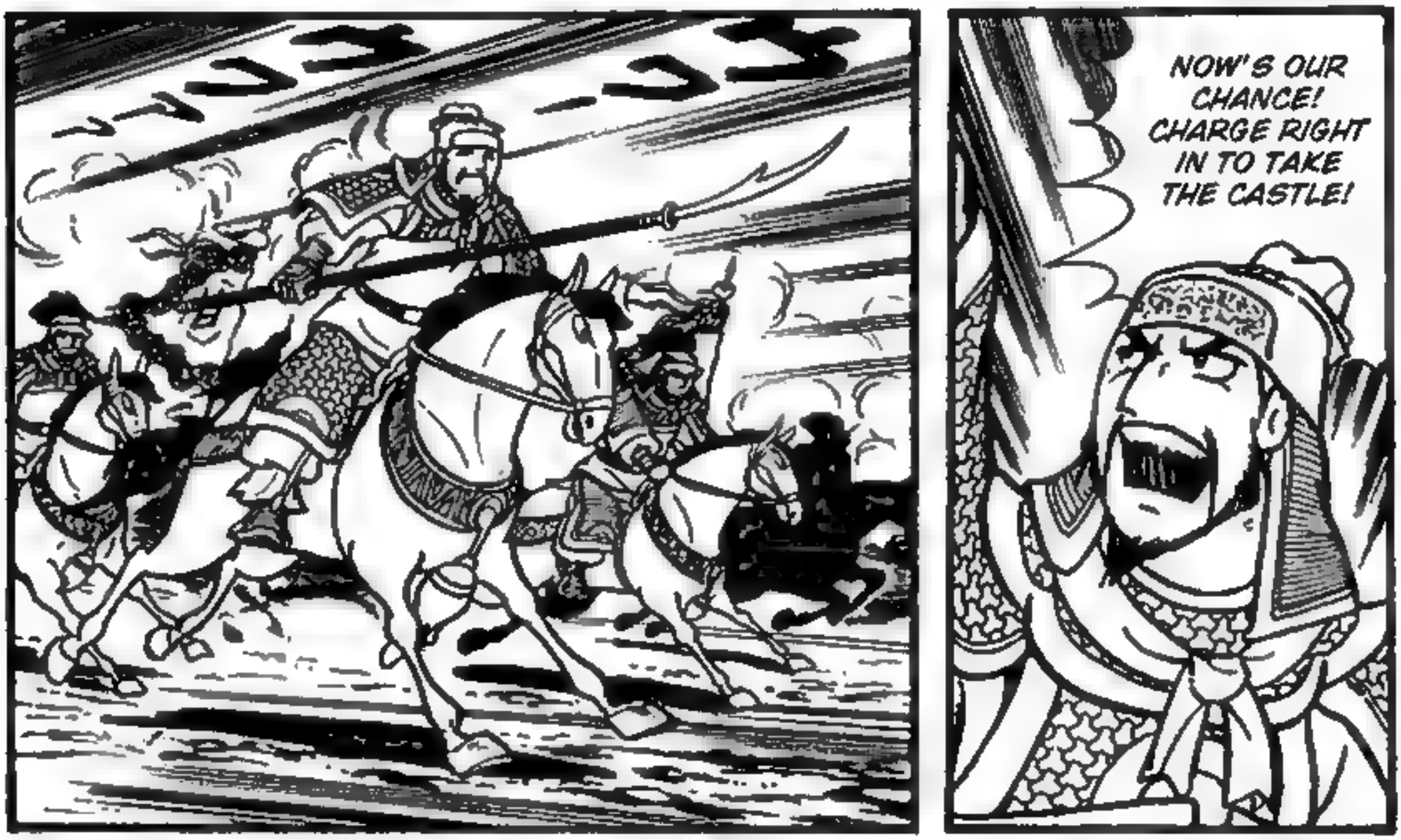
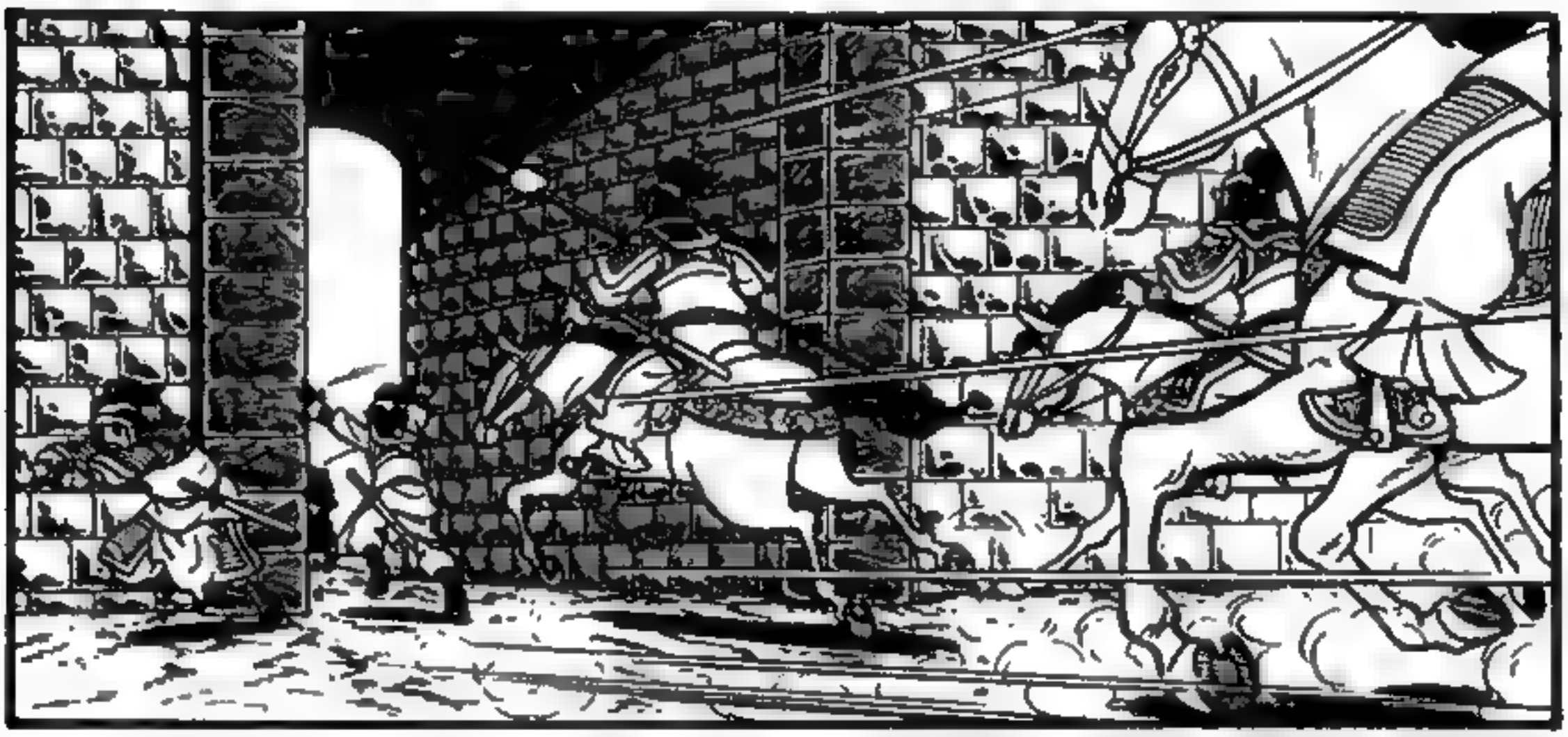
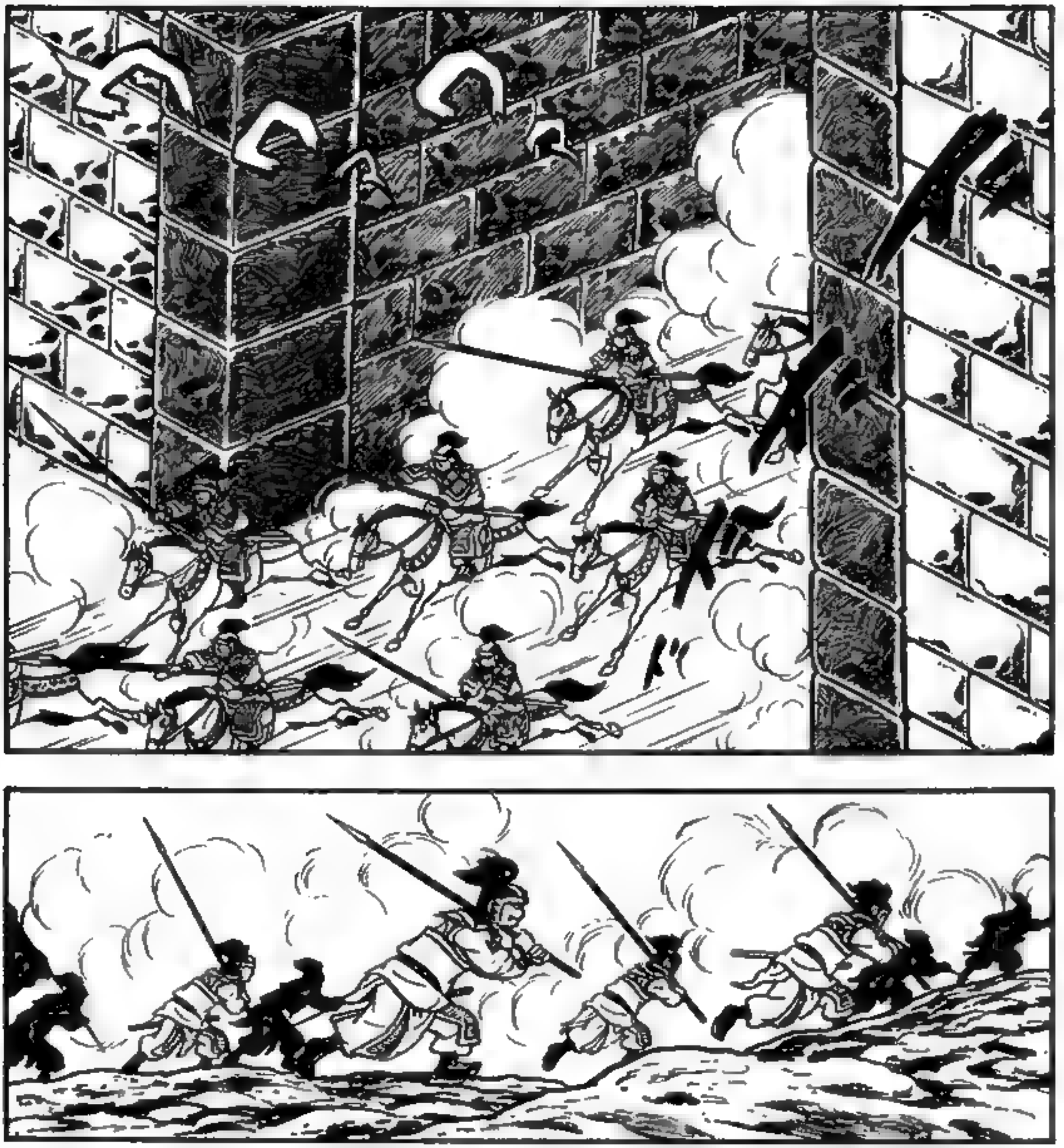

RETREAT,
RETREAT!
曹


NOW'S OUR CHANCE! CHARGE RIGHT IN TO TAKE THE CASTLE!





GOOD.

WE DID IT, GENERAL! THE CASTLE IS OURS AND THE ENEMIES HAVE FLED LIKE THE COWARDS THEY ARE!

WELL DONE, SOLDIERS!

THAT WAS MUCH EASIER THAN I EXPECTED.

HURRAH!
RAHHH RAH RAH!!!
RAH RAH RAHHH!

AFTER ME, MEN!

GOOD.
CAO HONG'S DONE HIS PART, SIR.

DDD-

SIR!

IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME UNTIL NANJUN FALLS AS WELL.

HAHAHA, TO THINK A CASTLE COULD BE CAPTURED THIS EASILY...!

WHAT!?

WE'VE BEEN COMPLETELY SURROUNDED BY ENEMIES!

AGHH!

甘

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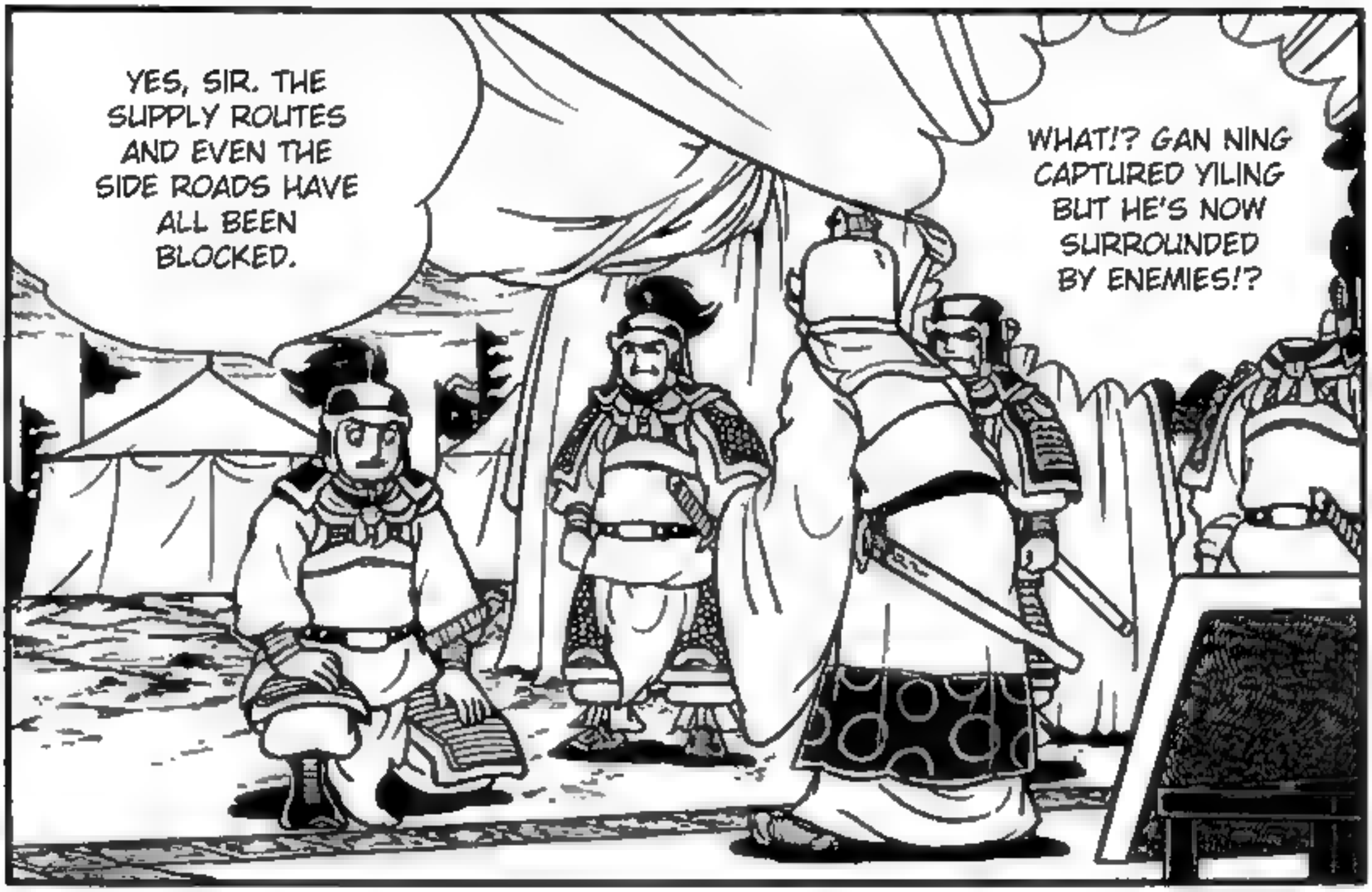
牛

A SINGLE SCROLL


YES, SIR. THE SUPPLY ROUTES AND EVEN THE SIDE ROADS HAVE ALL BEEN BLOCKED.
WHAT!? GAN NING CAPTURED YILING BUT HE'S NOW SURROUNDED BY ENEMIES!?

EVEN SO, GAN NING'S RESCUE TAKES PRIORITY. I SUGGEST LING TONG BE LEFT HERE TO COVER OUR ADVANCE TO YILING.

THAT BEING SAID, RUSHING TO HIS AID MAY CAUSE CAO REN TO COME OUT FROM NANJUN AND ATTACK OUR REAR.

I CAN HOLD THIS POSITION FOR AT LEAST 10 DAYS BUT NOT A DAY LONGER, I FEAR.

WHAT SAY YOU, LING TONG?

FINE. I SHALL GIVE YOU 10,000 SOLDIERS TO DEFEND THIS POSITION. IN THE MEANWHILE, THE REST OF OUR FORCES AND I SHALL HEAD TO YILING.

10 DAYS ...

AND SO, ZHOU YU HURRIED TO RELIEVE GAN NING'S FORCES AT ONCE

TO THE SOUTH OF YILING IS A NARROW AND STEEP SHORTCUT TO NANJUN. IF WE ROUT THE ENEMIES, THEY WILL SURELY FLEE TO NANJUN ALONG THAT PATH.

COMMANDER.

GOOD IDEA, LU MENG.

IF WE BLOCK THE ROUTE WITH TREE LOGS, I'M SURE IT'LL BE OF HELP IN THE FUTURE.

YES, SIR!

SEND 500 MEN TO BLOCK THE ROAD AND SET UP AN AMBUSH!

FOLLOW MY LEAD!

I, ZHOU TAI, WISH TO VOLUNTEER FOR THAT TASK.

IS THERE ANYONE CONFIDENT ENOUGH TO BREAK THROUGH ENEMY LINES AND CONTACT GAN NING?

IT'LL BE A DANGEROUS MISSION.

ALRIGHT THEN. YOUR MISSION IS TO TELL GAN NING TO COME OUT AND ATTACK WHEN MY FORCES REACH YILING.

WORRY NOT, SIR.

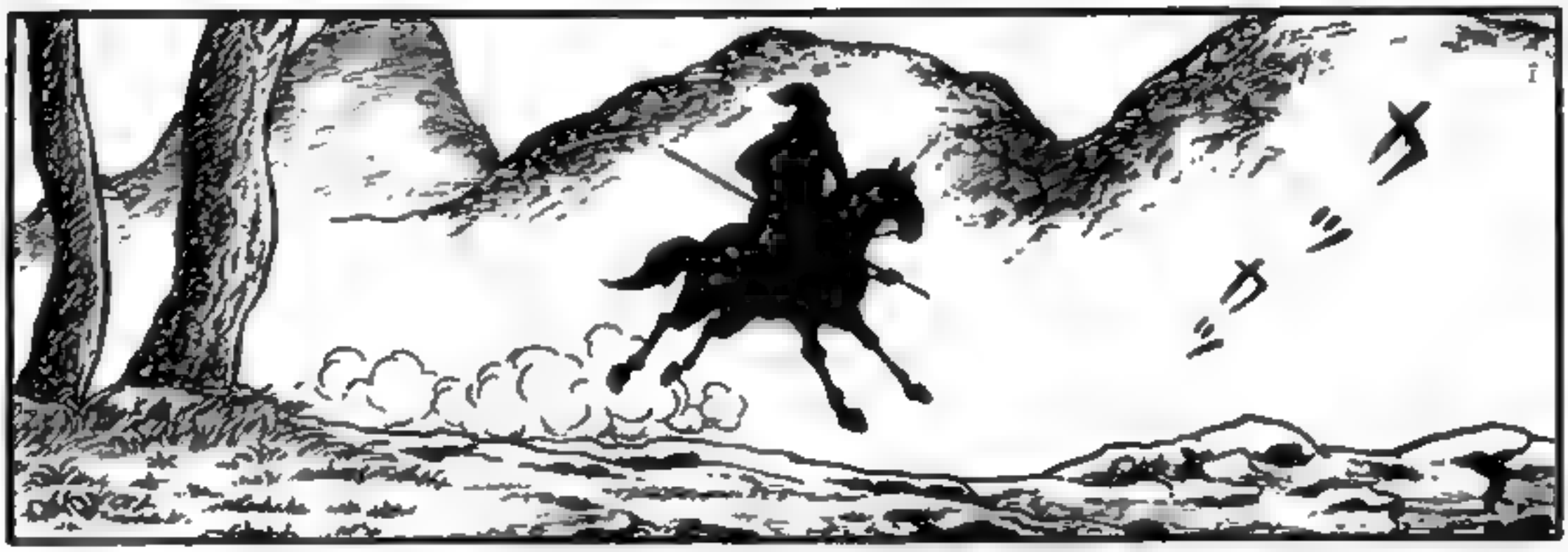
YES, SIR.

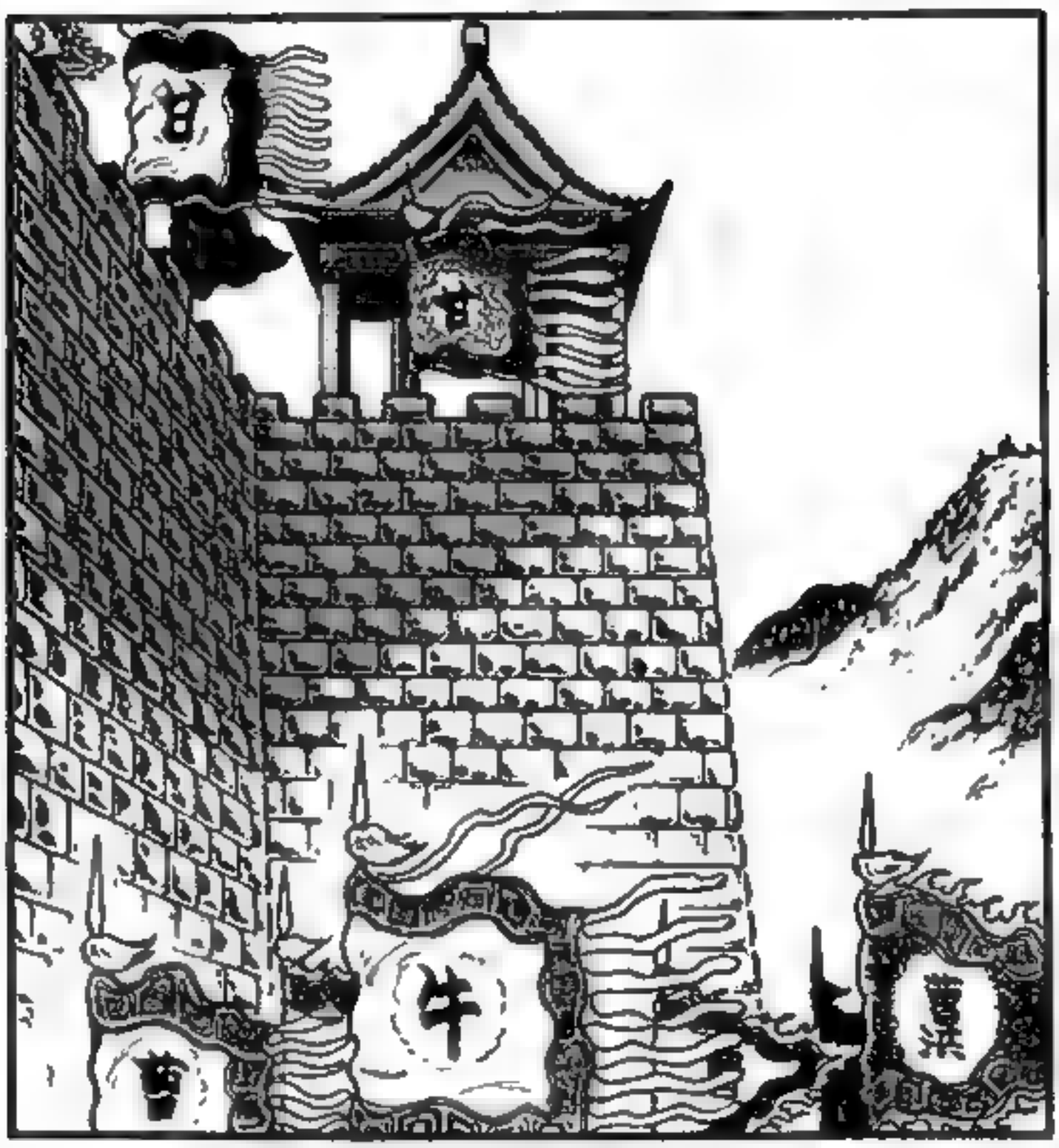
COORDINATING OUR ATTACKS IS KEY TO A QUICK VICTORY.

MAY LUCK BE WITH YOU.
I SHALL LEAVE AT ONCE.

I CAN'T SAY FOR CERTAIN. STILL, IT'S A MISSION THAT MUST BE DONE NO MATTER WHAT.
DO YOU THINK ZHOU TAI WILL REALLY BE FINE, COMMANDER?
周

LING TONG IS DOING HIS BEST TO HOLD OUT FOR 10 DAYS. WE MUST FINISH THE BATTLE HERE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE AND RUSH BACK.





I TRUST MY FATE TO YOU, MY STEED.

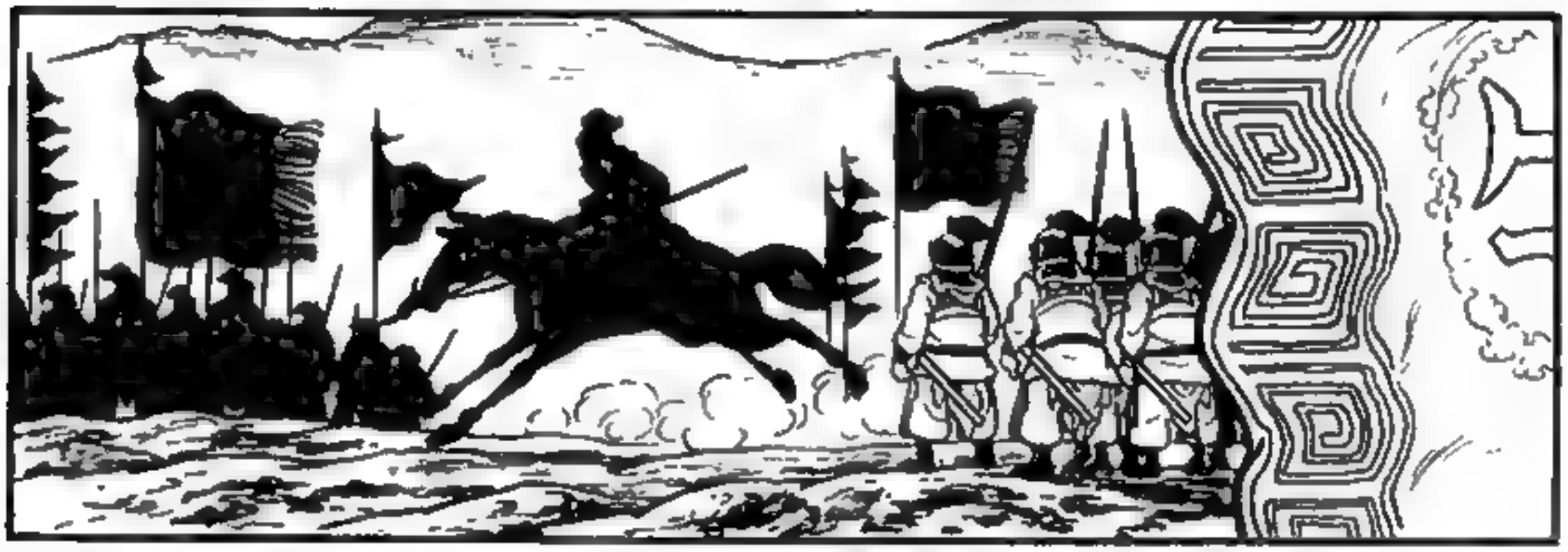
ENEMIES ON ALL SIDES...

?

ATP

YEAH, NO ONE WOULD BE CRAZY ENOUGH TO CHARGE ALONE INTO ENEMY LINES.
IT COULDN'T BE AN ENEMY THOUGH.

BEATS ME.
WHO'S THAT?



FROM WHOM!?

DO NOT INTERFERE! I BRING AN URGENT MESSAGE!

HALT RIGHT THERE!

THE CHANCEL-LOR HIMSELF!

OUT OF THE WAY! I'M HERE TO DELIVER CHANCELLOR CAO CAO'S MESSAGE!

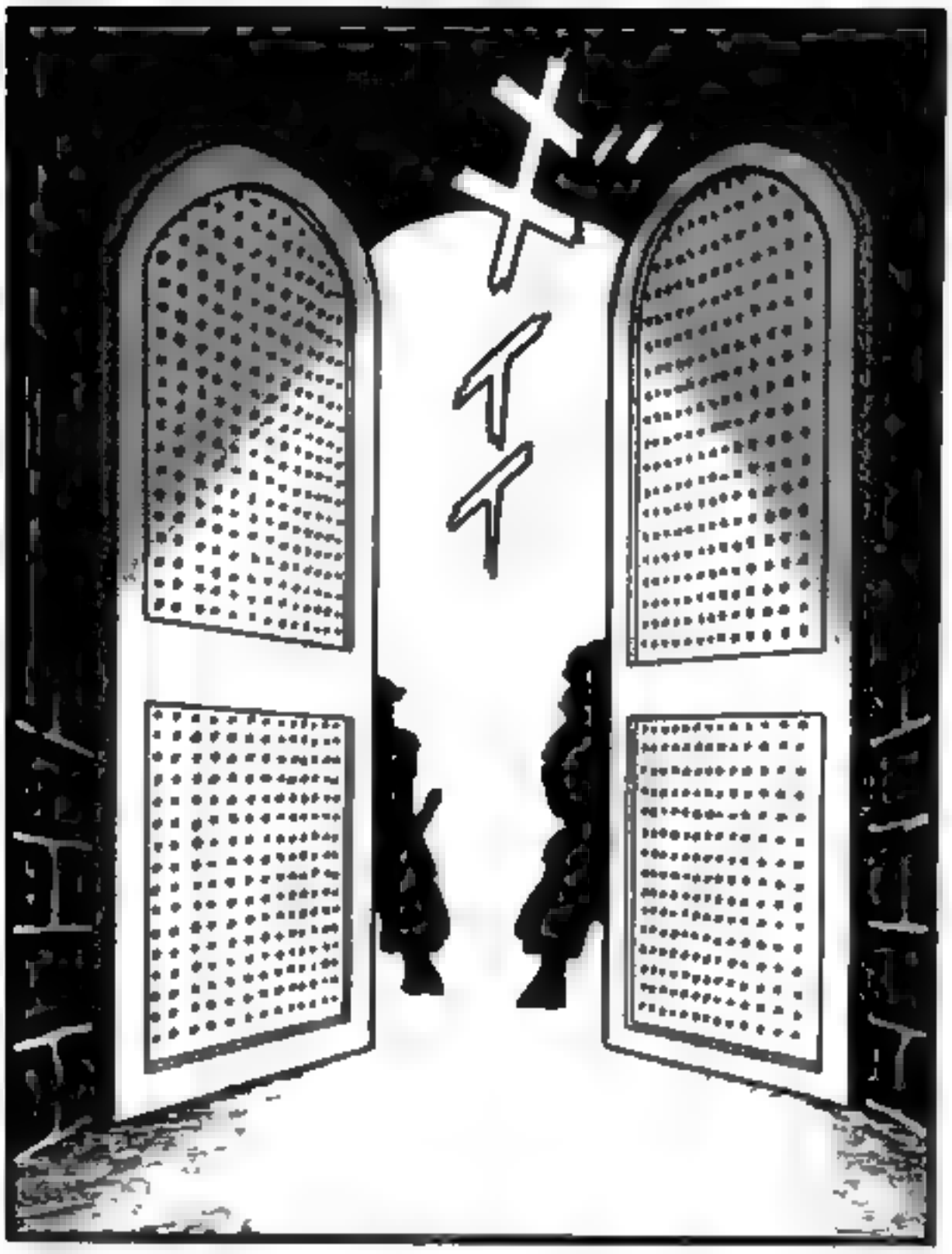
COME BACK!

HEY, STOP! WU TROOPS ARE IN THAT CASTLE! YOU'LL BE PICKED OFF BY THEIR ARCHERS IF YOU GET TOO CLOSE!

GAN NING!

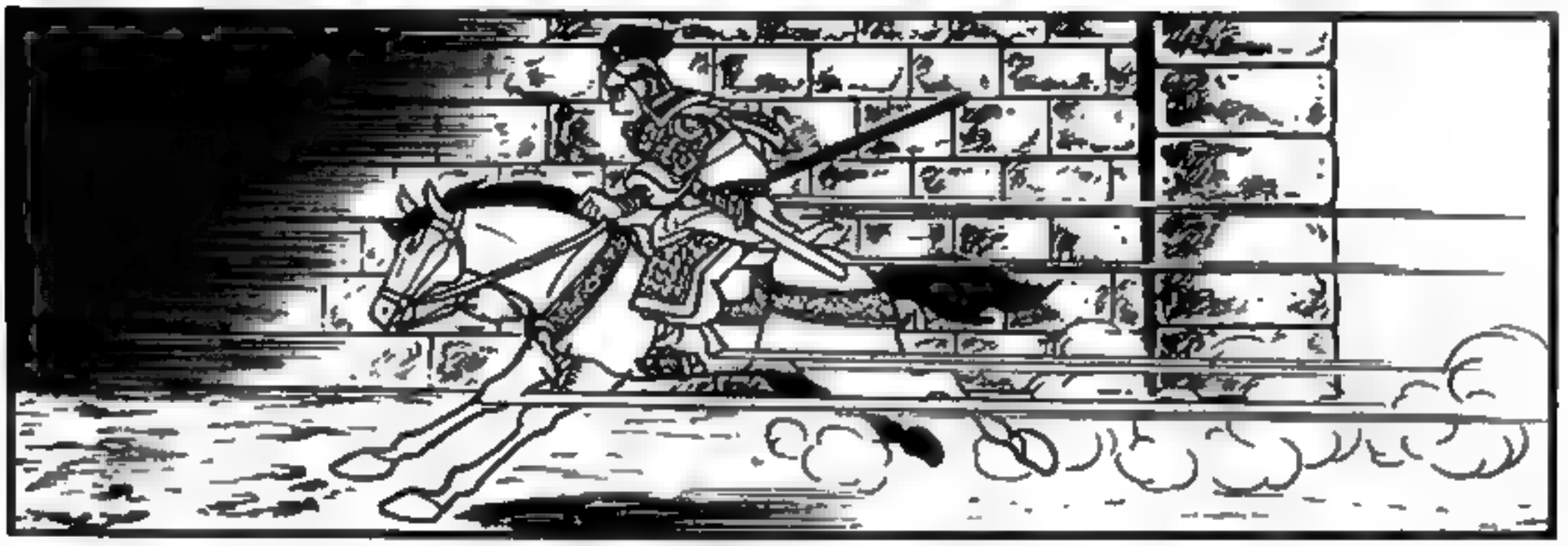
AH! ZHOU TAI!

甘



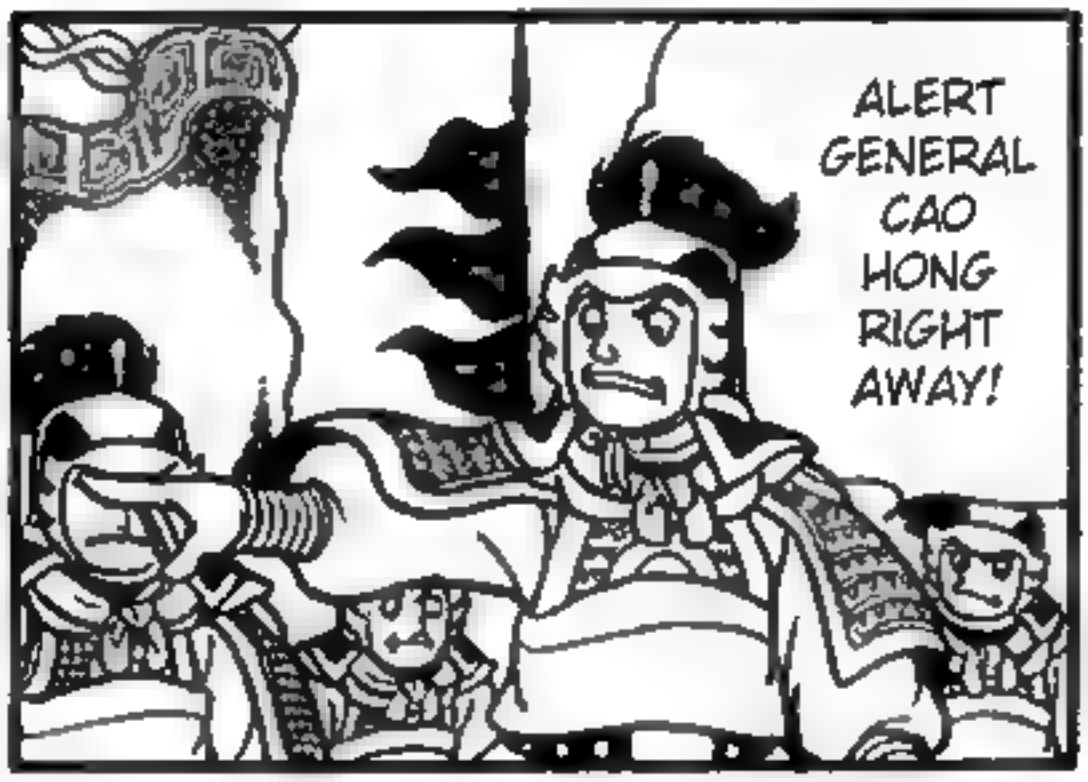
I'M HERE TO DELIVER A MESSAGE!

OPEN THE GATES IMMEDIATELY!



DAMN IT. HARD TO TELL WHOSE SIDE A LONE SOLDIER'S ON IF HE AIN'T NO FLAG-BEARER...

AHH! HE WENT INSIDE!


ALERT GENERAL CAO HONG RIGHT AWAY!

HEH, I WAS ONLY ABLE TO MAKE IT HERE *BECAUSE* I WAS ALONE.
COMING ALL THE WAY HERE ALONE? COLOUR ME IMPRESSED, ZHOU TAI.

COMMANDER ZHOU YU IS COMING HERE TO RELIEVE YOUR BESIEGED FORCES.

SO WHAT IS IT YOU NEEDED TO TELL ME?

YES, AND HE WANTS YOU TO COORDINATE YOUR ATTACK WITH HIM.

THE COM-MANDER HIMSELF!?

オーオー

ウ

UNDER-STOOD.

HEAR THAT, MEN!? REIN-FORCE-MENTS ARE ON THEIR WAY!

SO GET A GOOD MEAL AND PREPARE FOR BATTLE!

WHAT COULD THIS MEAN ...?

HM?

A MESSENGER DASHED PAST YOUR LINES AND ENTERED THE CASTLE?

COOKING-FIRES?

I THINK THE SMOKE IS FROM THEIR COOKING-FIRES.

CAO HONG, LOOK.

NOT ONLY THAT, THEIR GARRISON SEEMS UNUSUALLY SPIRITED...

THEY'RE FILLING THEIR STOMACHS?

牛

IF SO, THEN WE'LL BE ATTACKED FROM THE FRONT AND REAR.

WHAT!

YOU THINK ENEMY REINFORCEMENTS MIGHT BE APPROACHING?

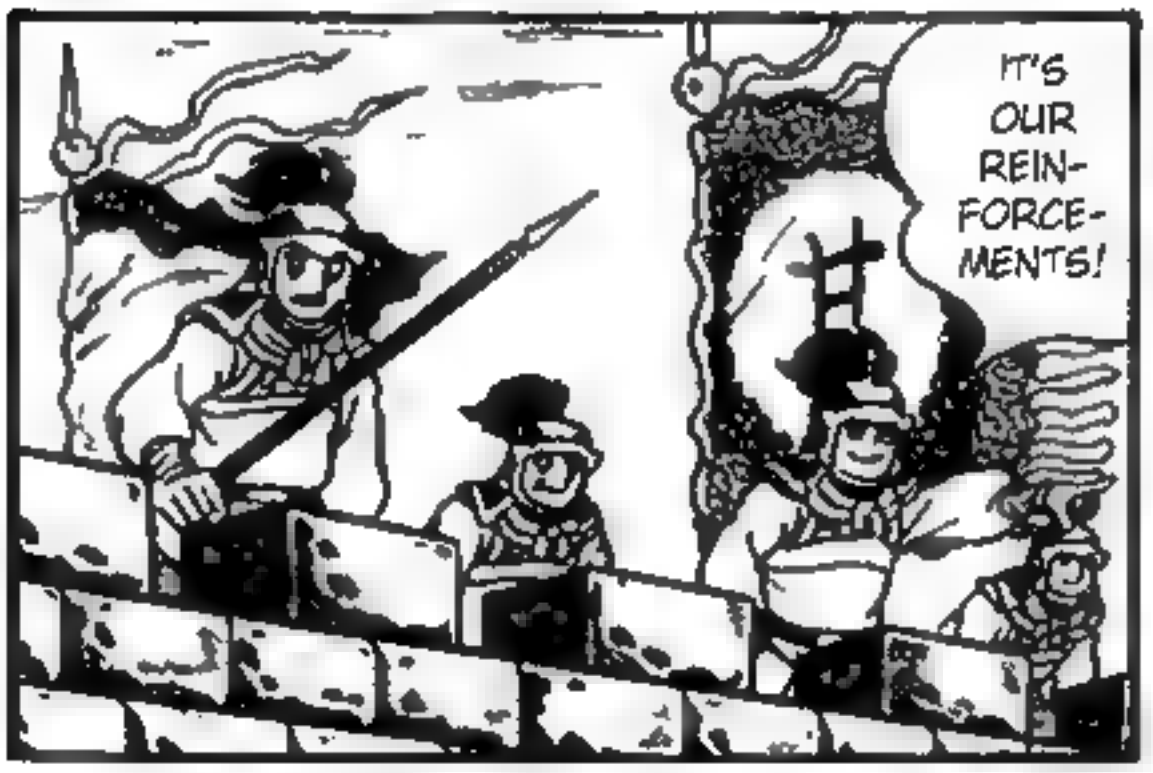
DAMN... CAPTURING YILING WILL BE OUT OF THE QUESTION THEN.

WE'LL BE DEFEATED FOR SURE IF THAT HAPPENS!

WHAT'S DONE IS DONE! SAY NO MORE!

IT SEEMS THE INITIAL PLAN TO LURE THE ENEMIES INSIDE AND SURROUND THEM WAS DOOMED TO FAIL FROM THE START...

WHAT'S NOW IMPORTANT IS TO FOCUS ON THE UPCOMING BATTLE.


IT'S OUR REIN-FORCE-MENTS!

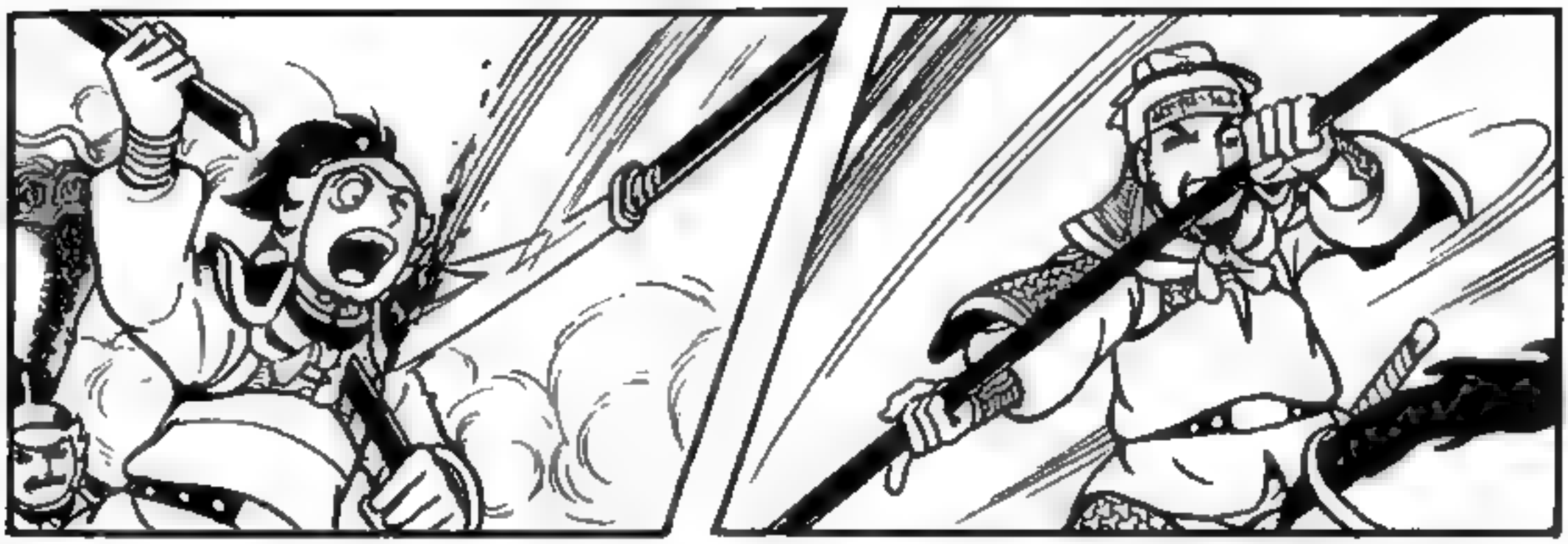
IT'S THE WU!

吳

CHARGE!

ATTACK!

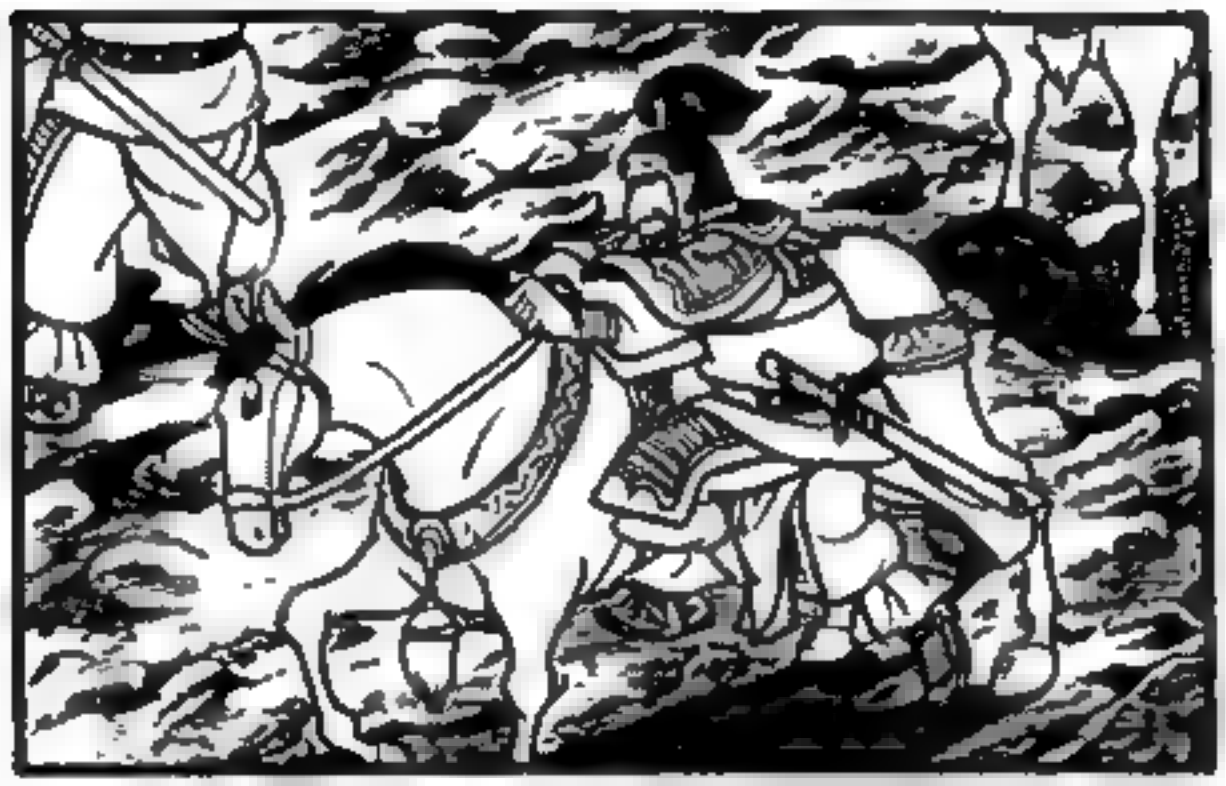
吳
IT'S TIME FOR US TO ATTACK AS WELL!


RETREAT!
RETREAT TO
NANJUN VIA
THE SHORTCUT!

AH!

OUR HORSES CAN'T CROSS AT ALL...

W-WHY IS THE ROAD BLOCKED!?

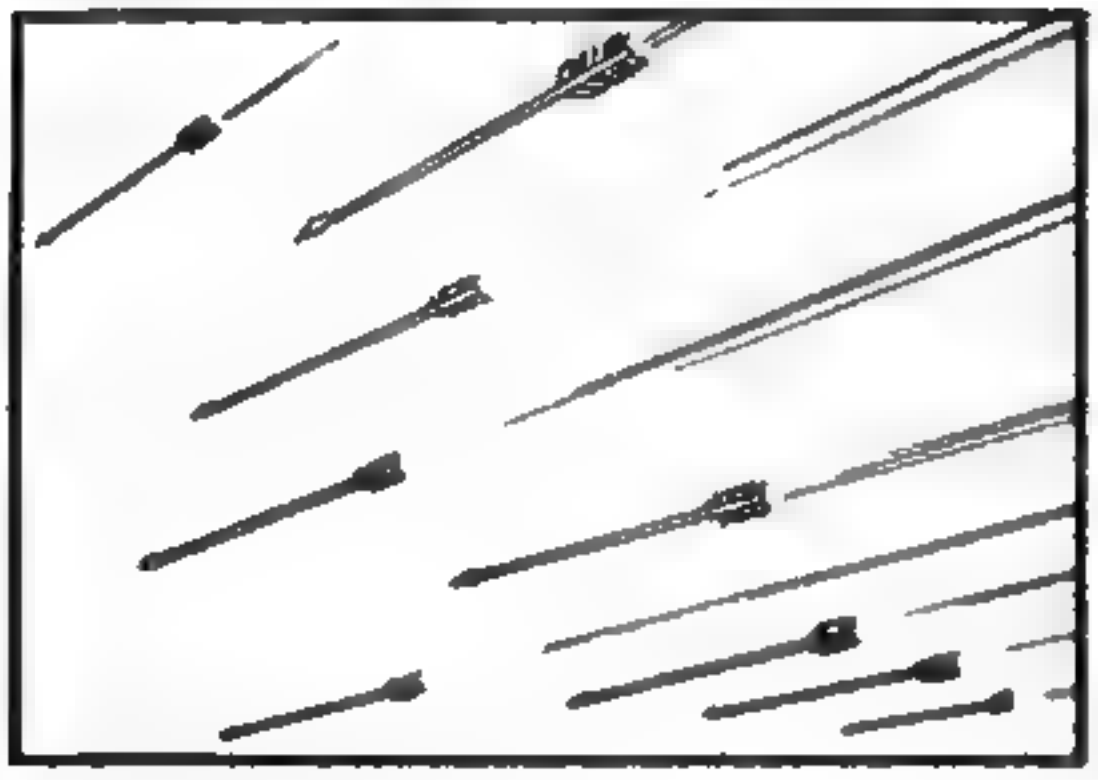


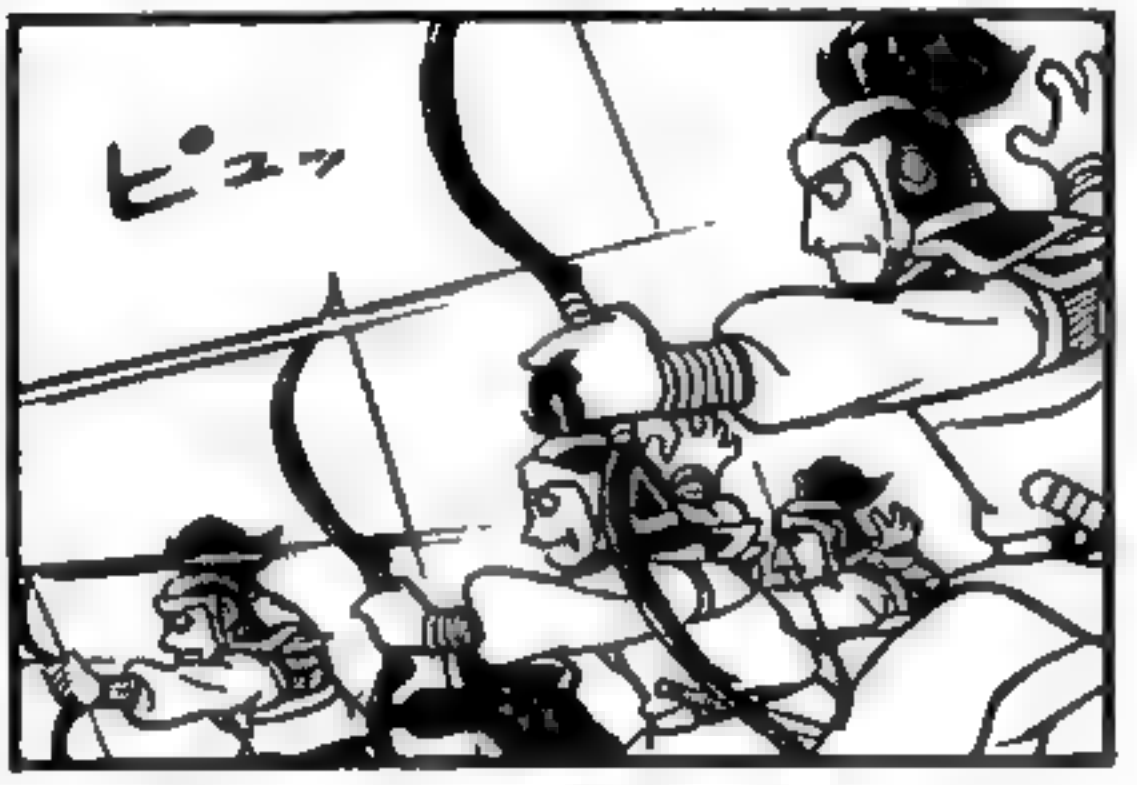
ABANDON YOUR HORSES, MEN!

UGH...

ENEMY AMBUSH!

AH!



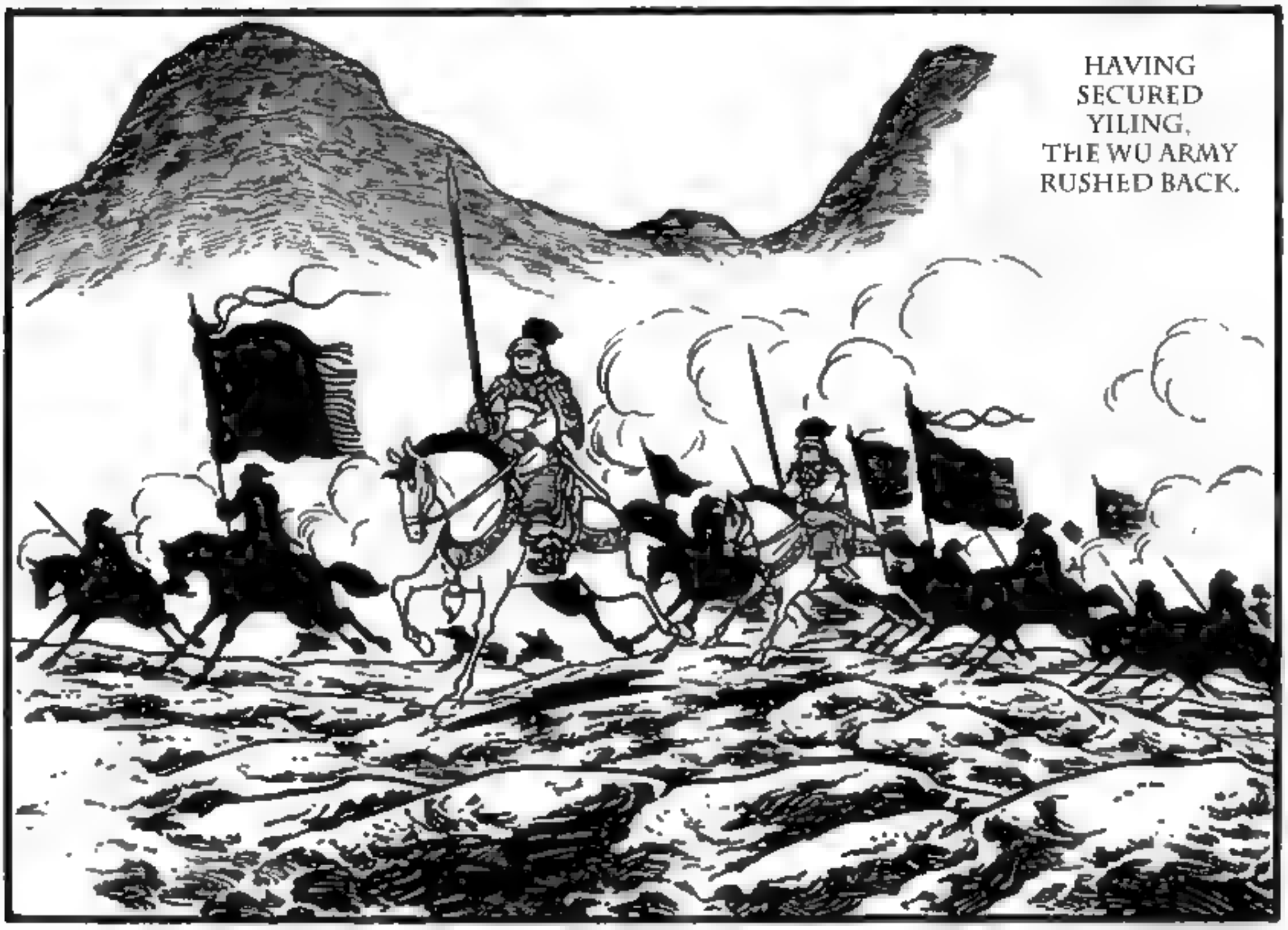

ピュッ

UGH!

AGH!

THE WLI
SOLDIERS
ONCE AGAIN
SUSTAINED
HEAVY
CASUALTIES

FORTUNATELY ENOUGH, CAO HONG, CAO CHUN, NIU JIN, AND A FEW SURVIVORS MANAGED TO REACH NANJUN.


HAVING SECURED YILING, THE WU ARMY RUSHED BACK.

THE SIEGE ON NANJUN BEGAN ONCE MORE.

HMM...

NO USE REGRETTING ABOUT IT NOW. ALL WE CAN DO IS LEARN FROM OUR MISTAKES.

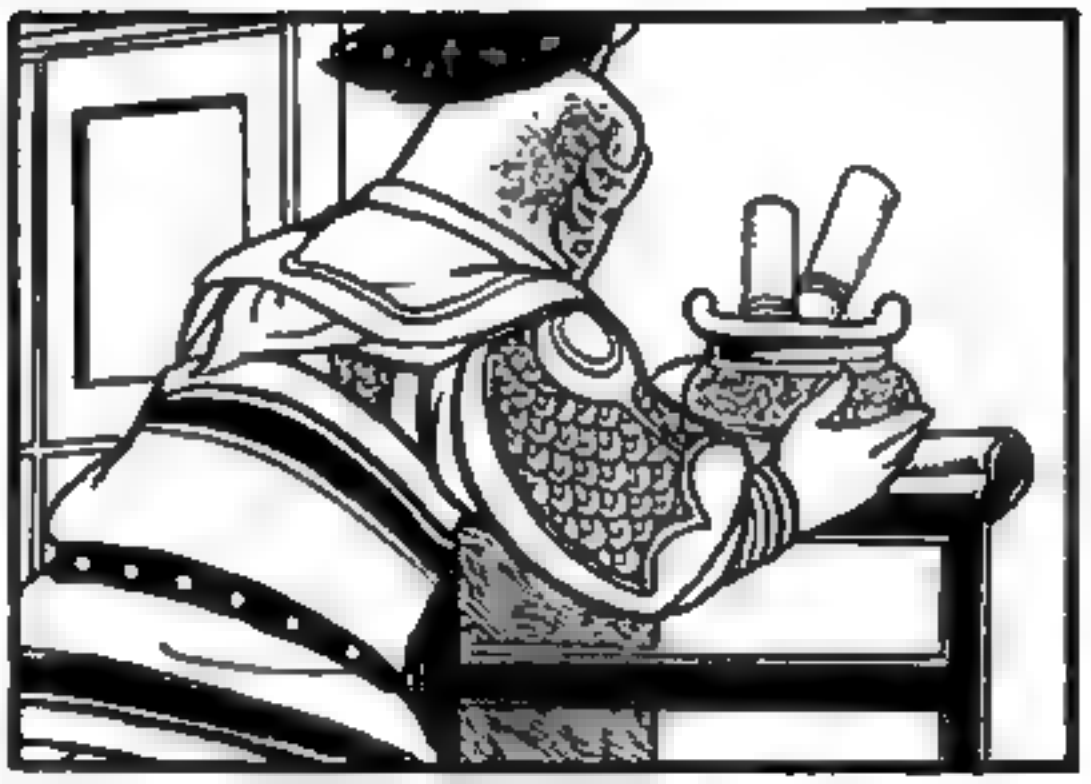
WE SHOULD HAVE DONE AS THE CHANCELLOR ADVISED AND REMAINED INSIDE NO MATTER WHAT...

WITH YILING CAPTURED BY THE ENEMIES, I WORRY NANJUN WON'T HOLD FOR MUCH LONGER.

?

THAT'S IT! I ALMOST FORGOT!

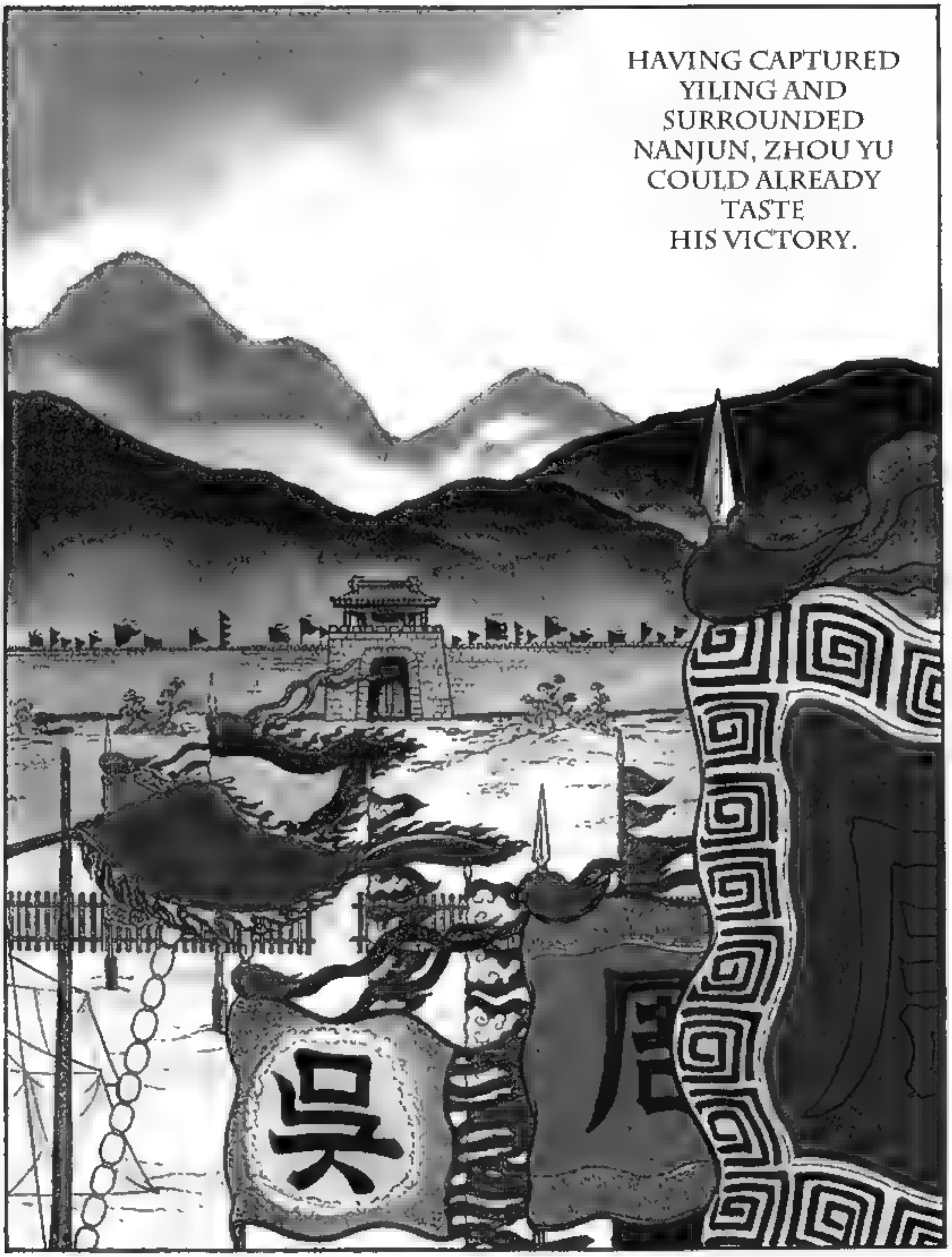
THE CHANCELLOR LEFT US A SINGLE SCROLL TO LOOK FOR GUIDANCE WHEN WORST COMES TO WORST.



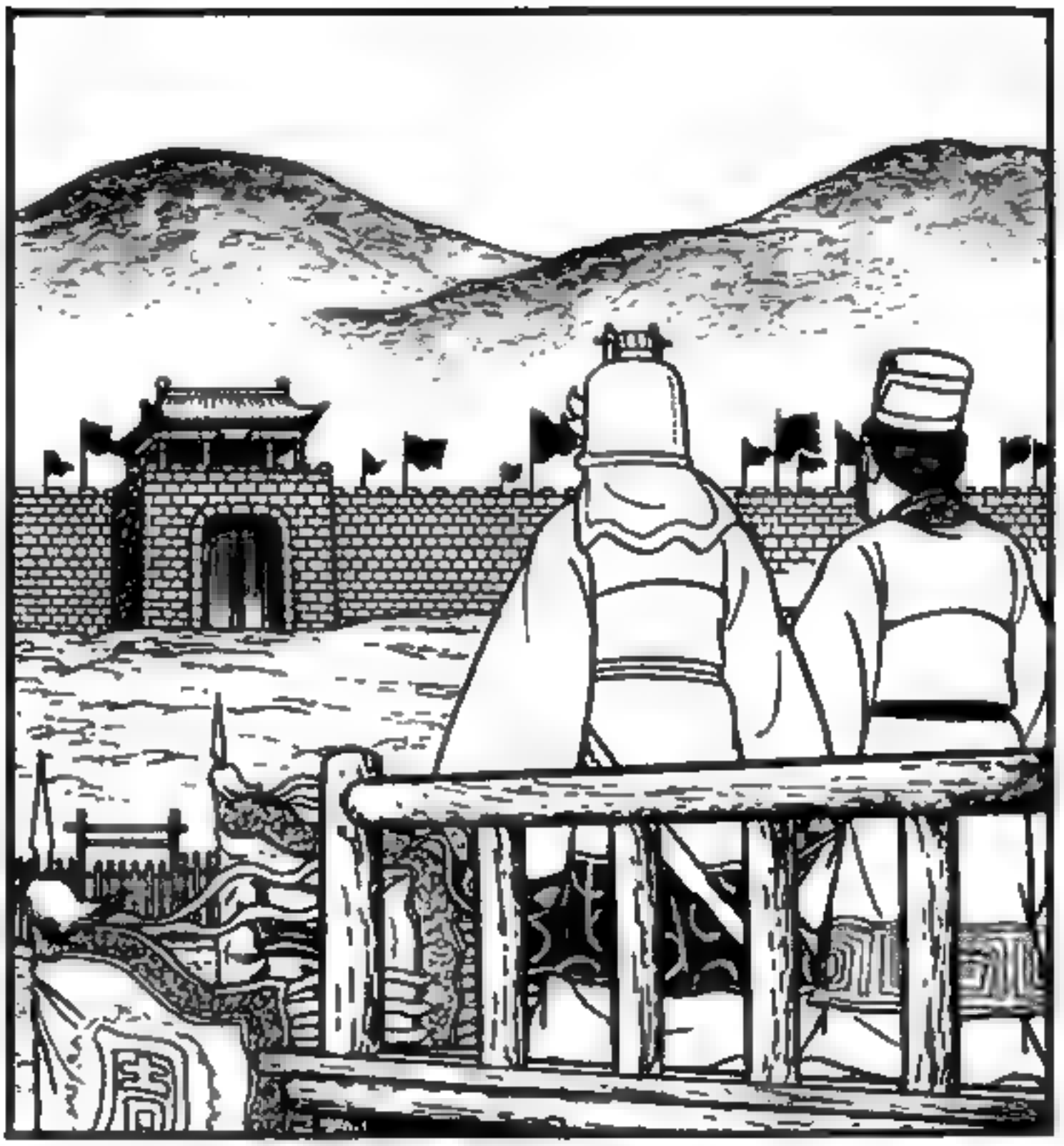
CAO CAO, THE MAN WHO CONQUERED TWO-THIRDS OF CHINA, UTILIZED ALL OF HIS CUNNING AND WIT TO DEVISE A LAST-RESORT PLAN FOR THE DEFENSE OF NANJUN.

EVEN SO, CAO REN COULD NOT HELP DOUBT HOW MUCH USE A SINGLE SCROLL WOULD REALLY BE IN THIS DIRE SITUATION.

CAO CAO'S SECRET STRATEGY



HM?



WHAT IS IT, COM-MANDER?

晉

LOOK AT THE ENEMY GUARDS.

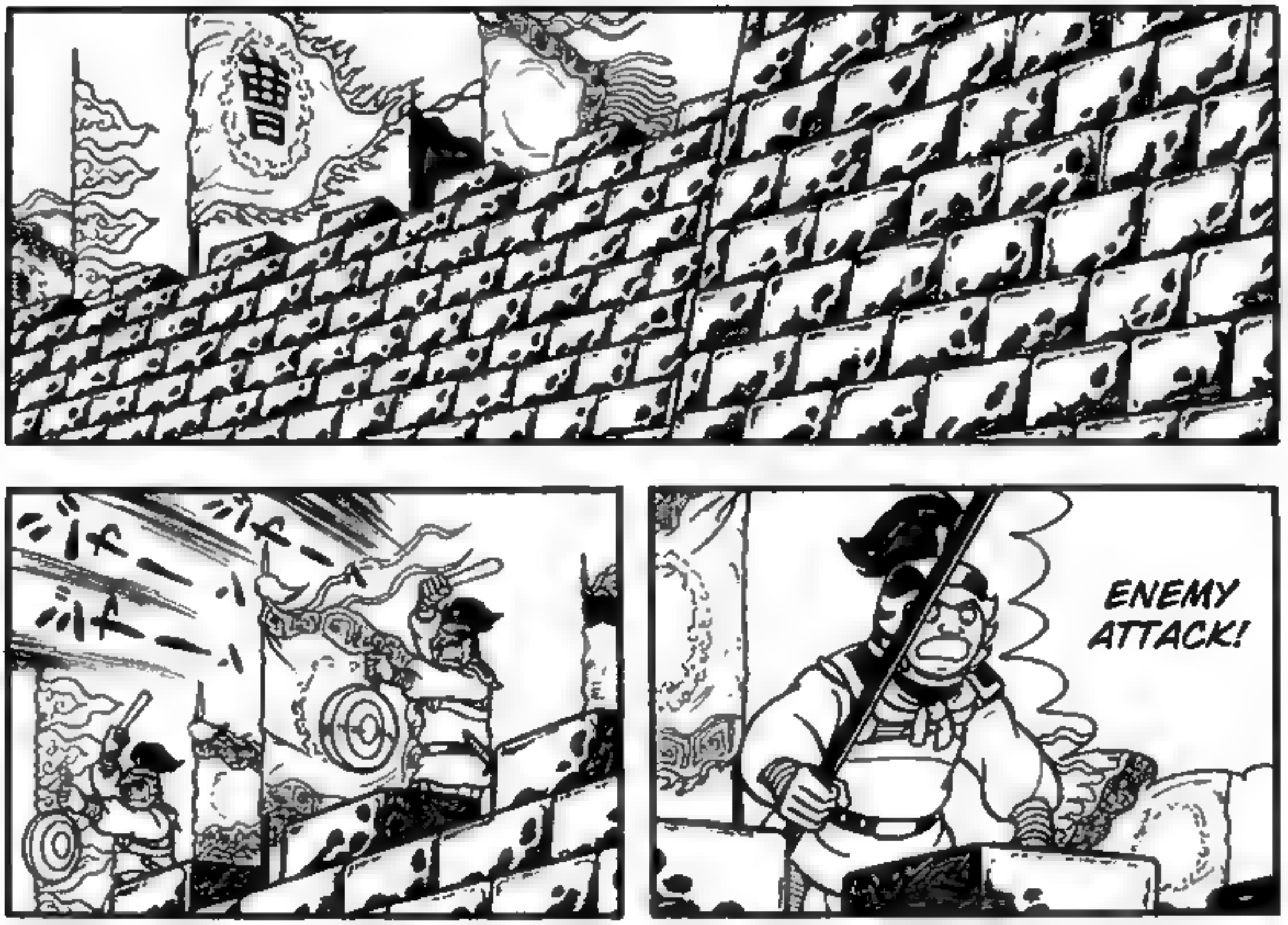
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, OTHER THAN THE TOKEN GUARDS NEAR THE GATES, THE REST OF THE WALL IS OCCUPIED ONLY BY FLAGS.
IT LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE CARRYING RATION POUCHES.

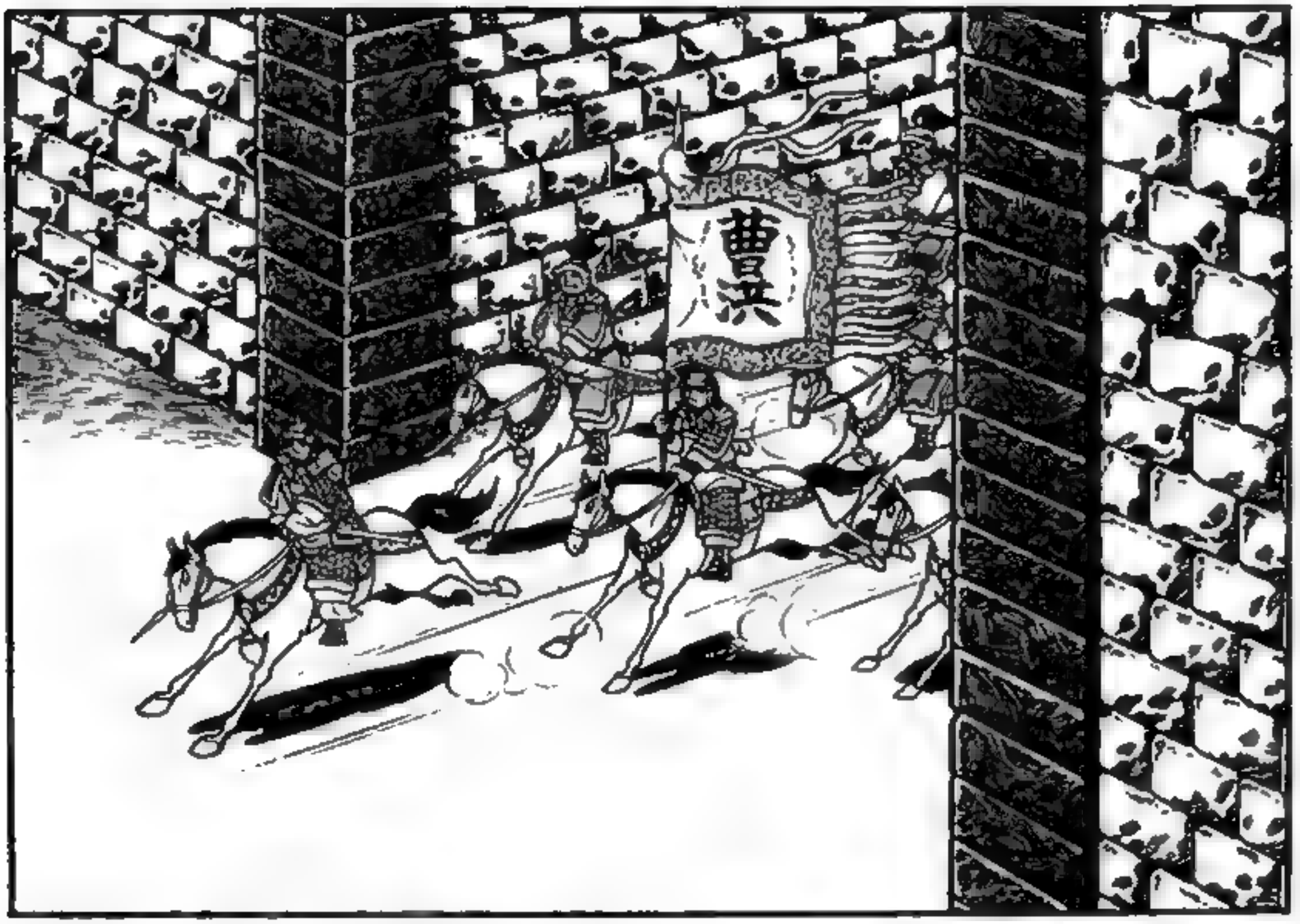
ATTACKING ENEMIES ALREADY THINKING OF FLEEING IS THE SUREST WAY TO VICTORY.

CAO REN MUST'VE DEEMED DEFENDING NANJUN A LOST CAUSE AND IS NOW PLANNING TO RETREAT.

GIVE THE SIGNAL TO ATTACK!

周
吳
DON'T FALL BEHIND ME, MEN.
CHARGE!


ENEMY ATTACK!
STICK TO THE PLAN, MEN.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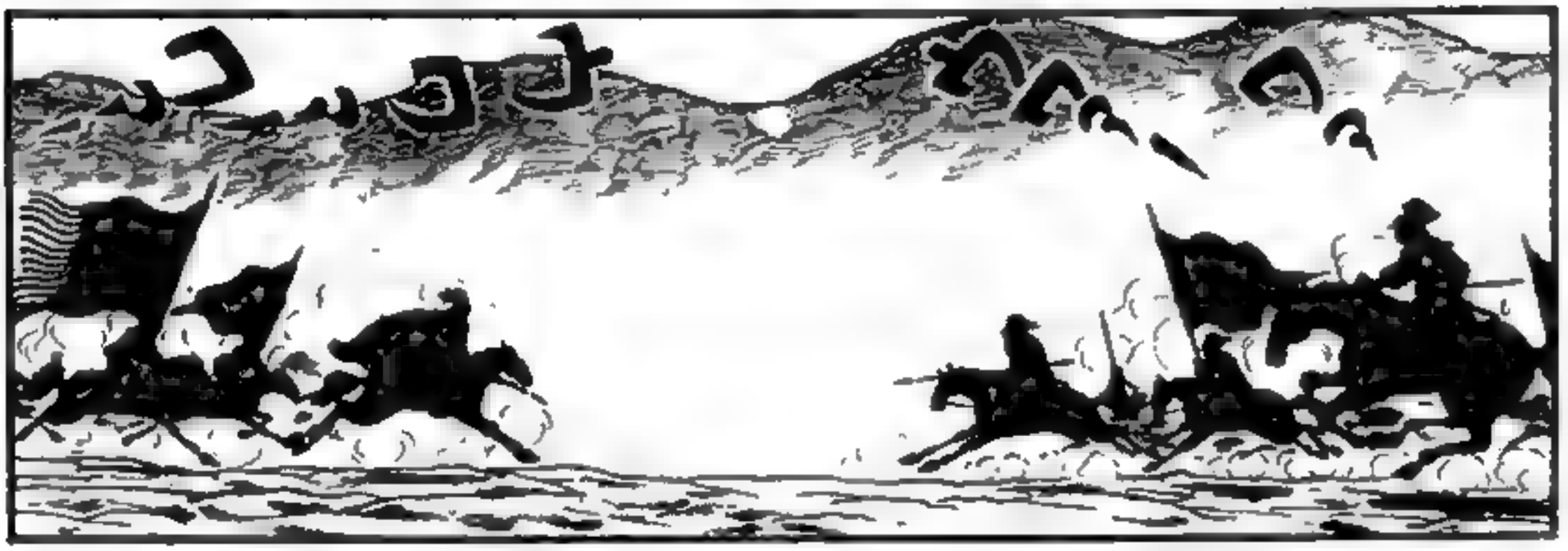
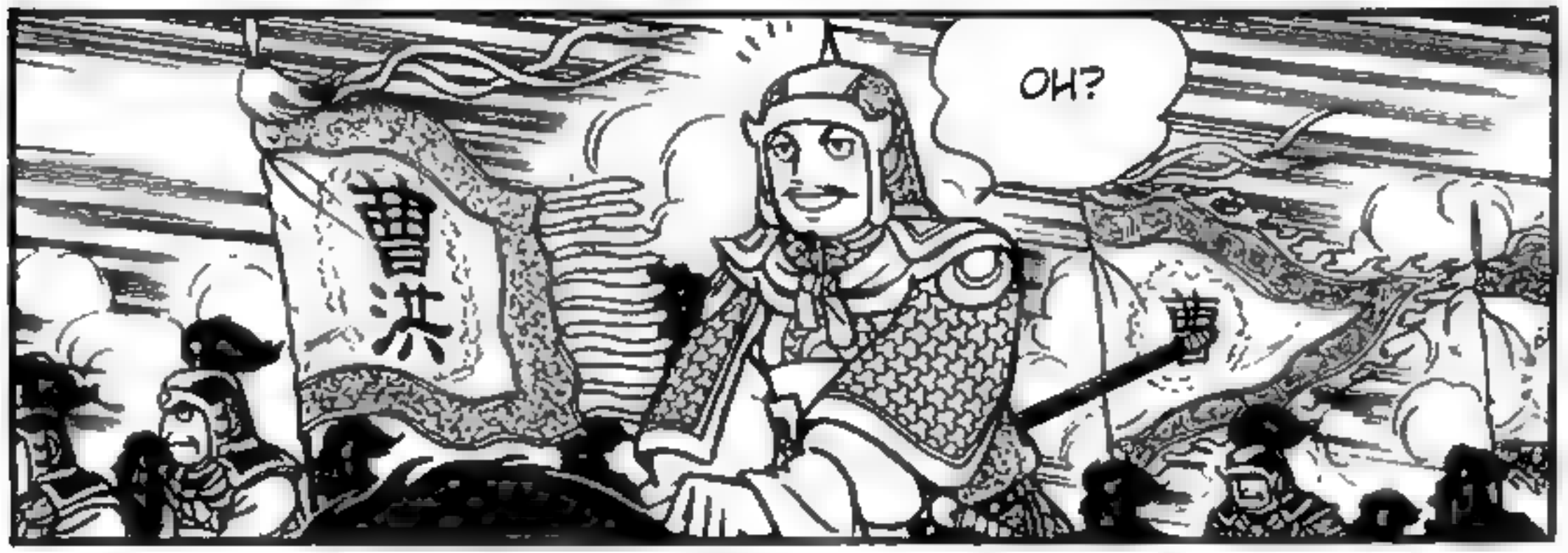



曹洪
OH?
曹

IS THAT ZHOU YU I SEE!?

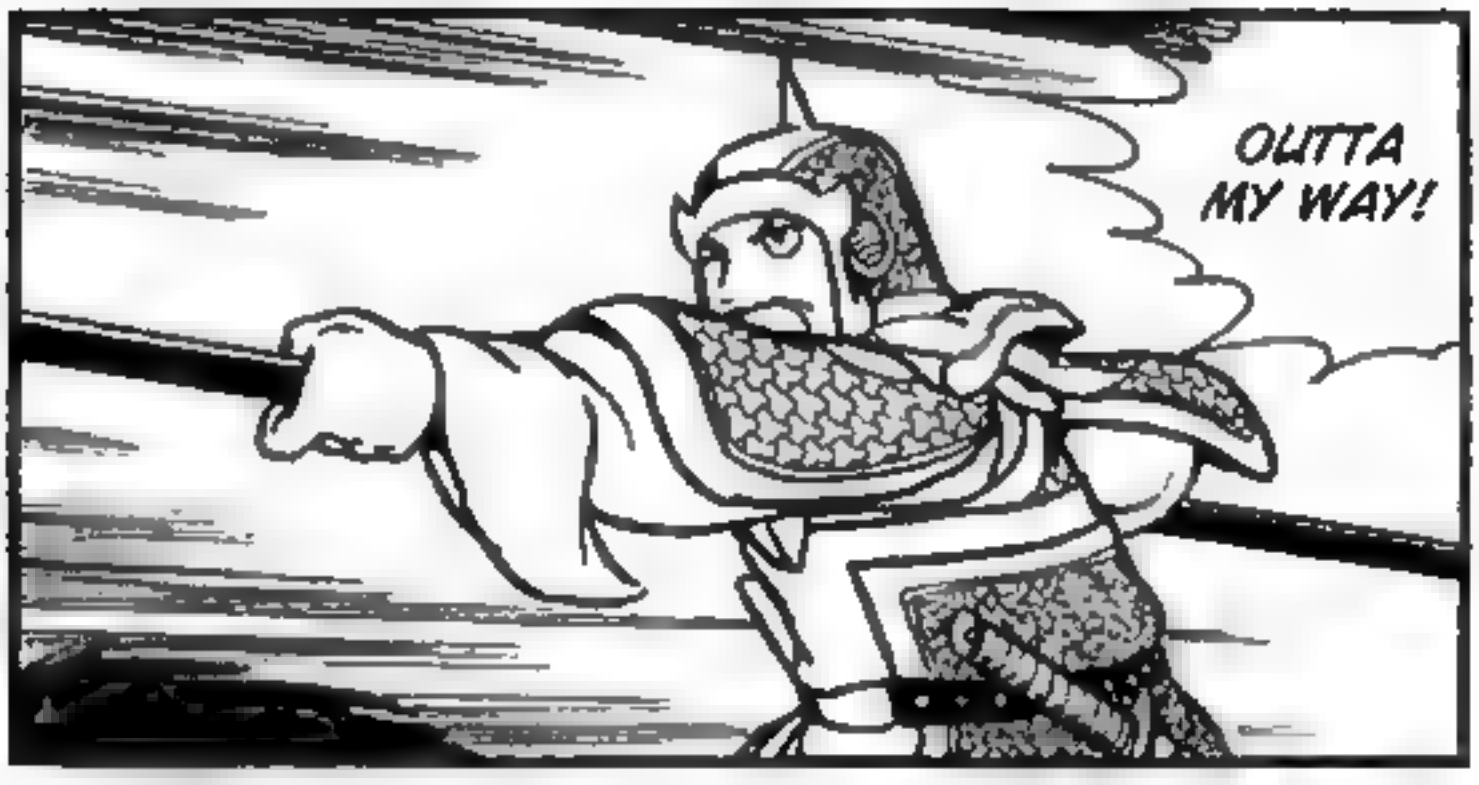
HAHA. I HAVE NO NEED TO FIGHT A GENERAL ALREADY PLANNING TO FLEE.

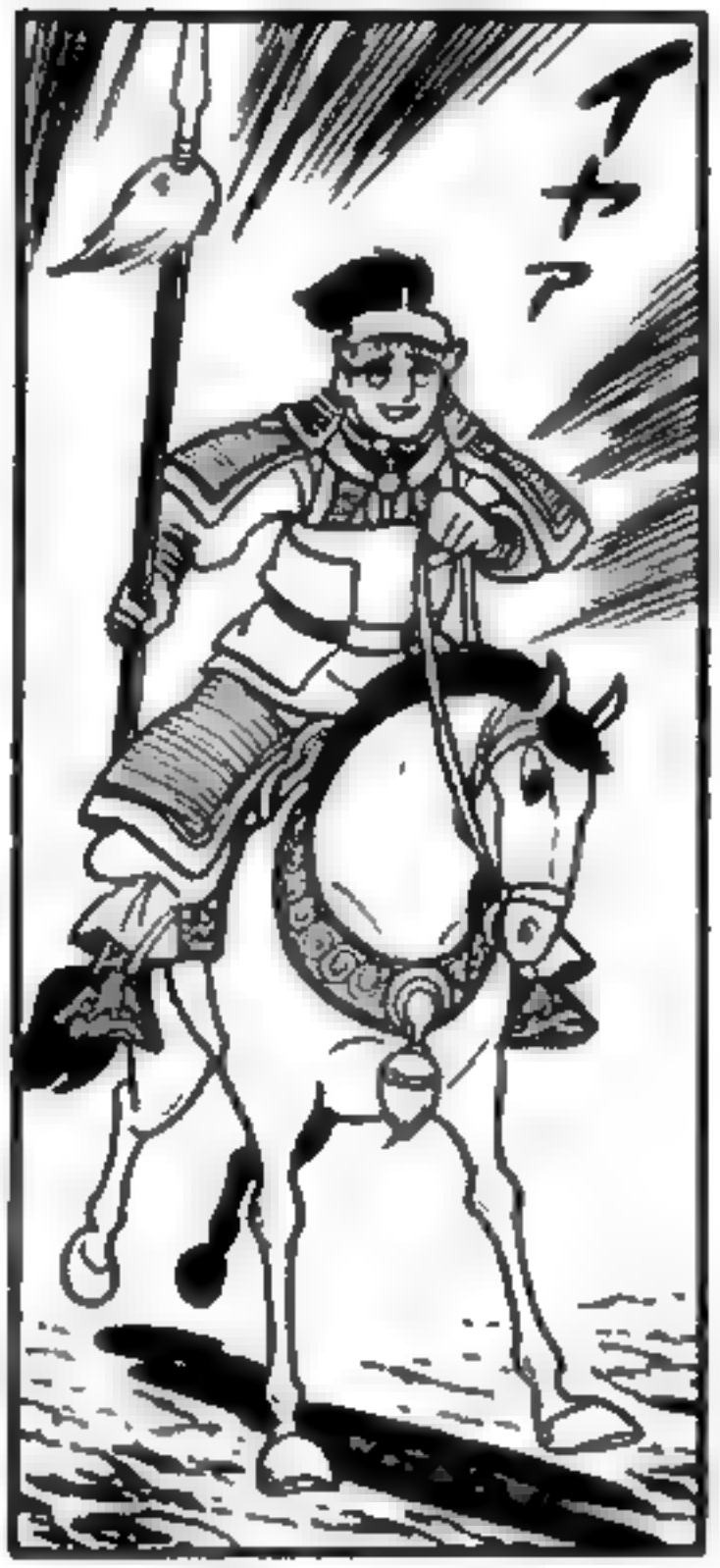
I, CAO HONG, CHALLENGE YOU TO A DUEL!

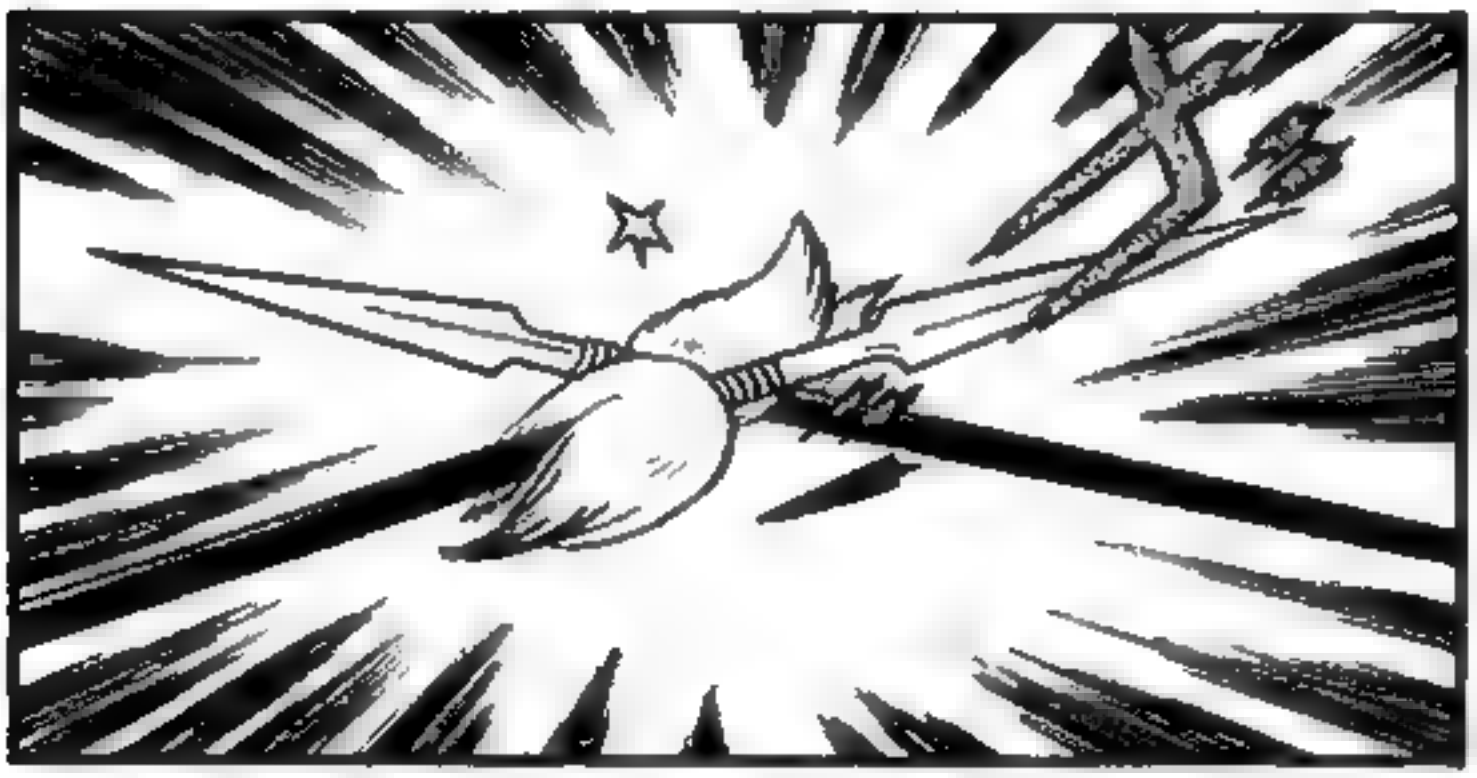
WHO WISHES TO REMOVE THIS MUTT FROM MY SIGHT!?

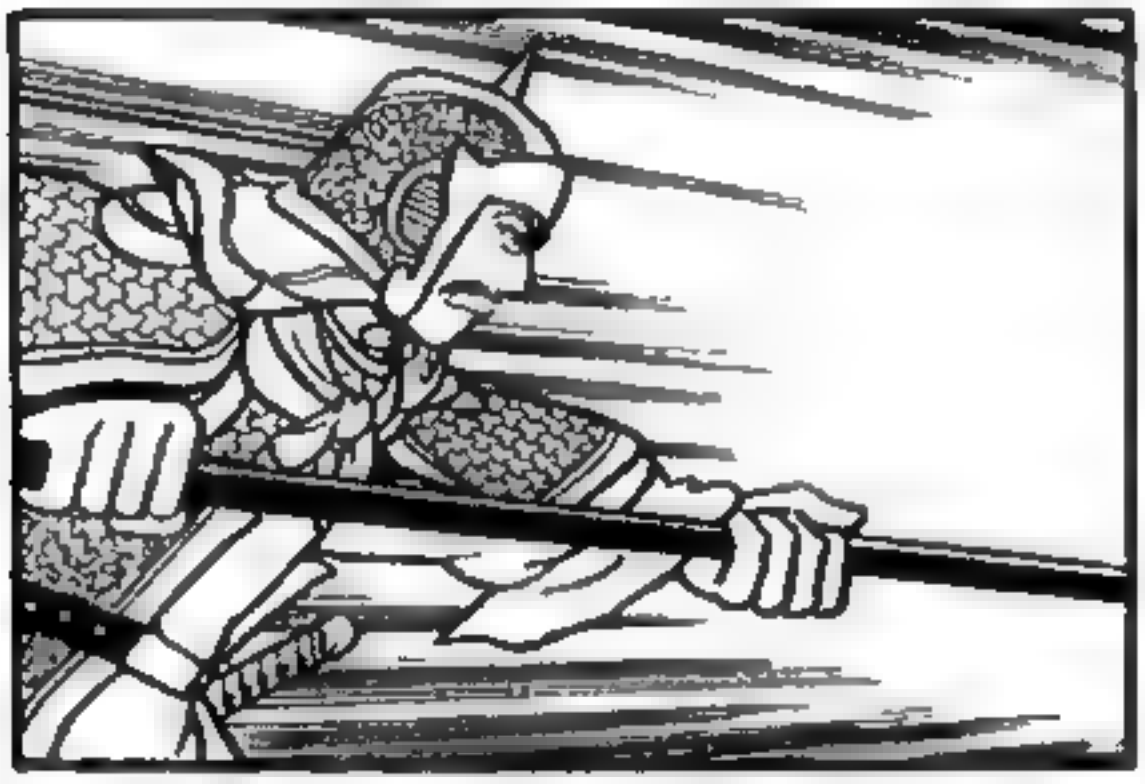
YES, PLEASE DO SO, HAN DANG.

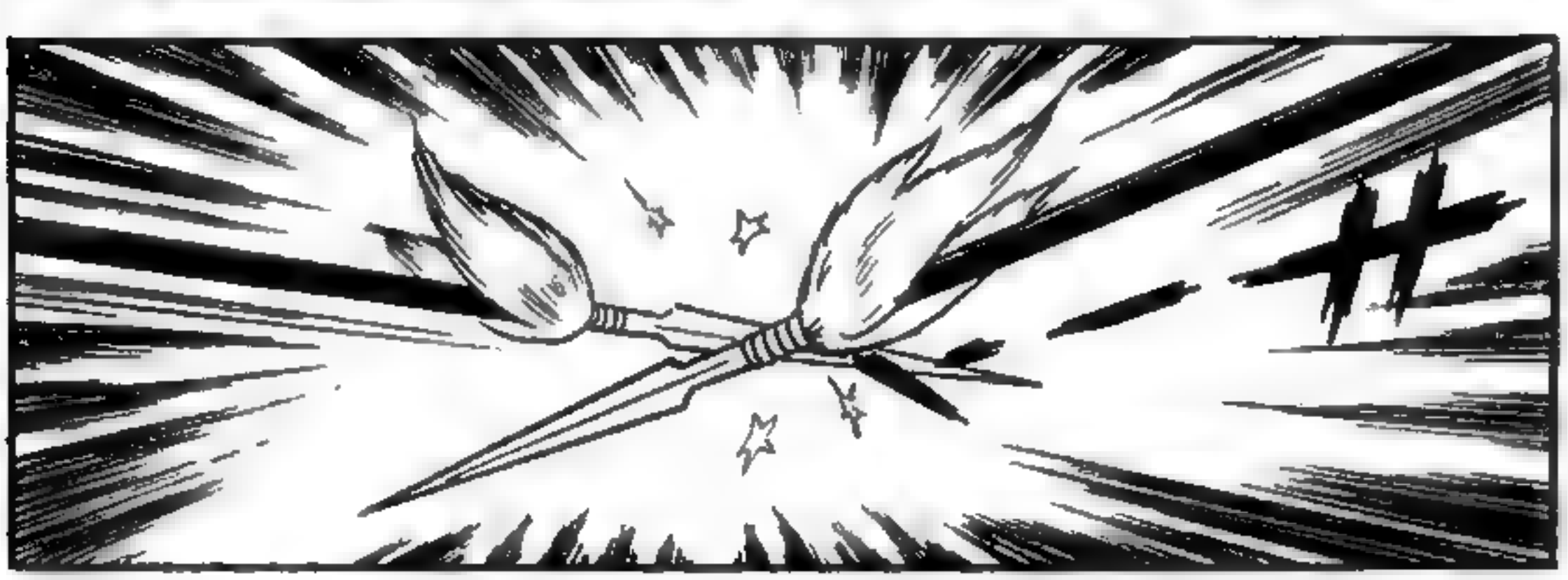
ALLOW ME, SIR.


OUTTA MY WAY!


TAP
TAP







AGH!

WHOA-

RUNNING AWAY ALREADY?

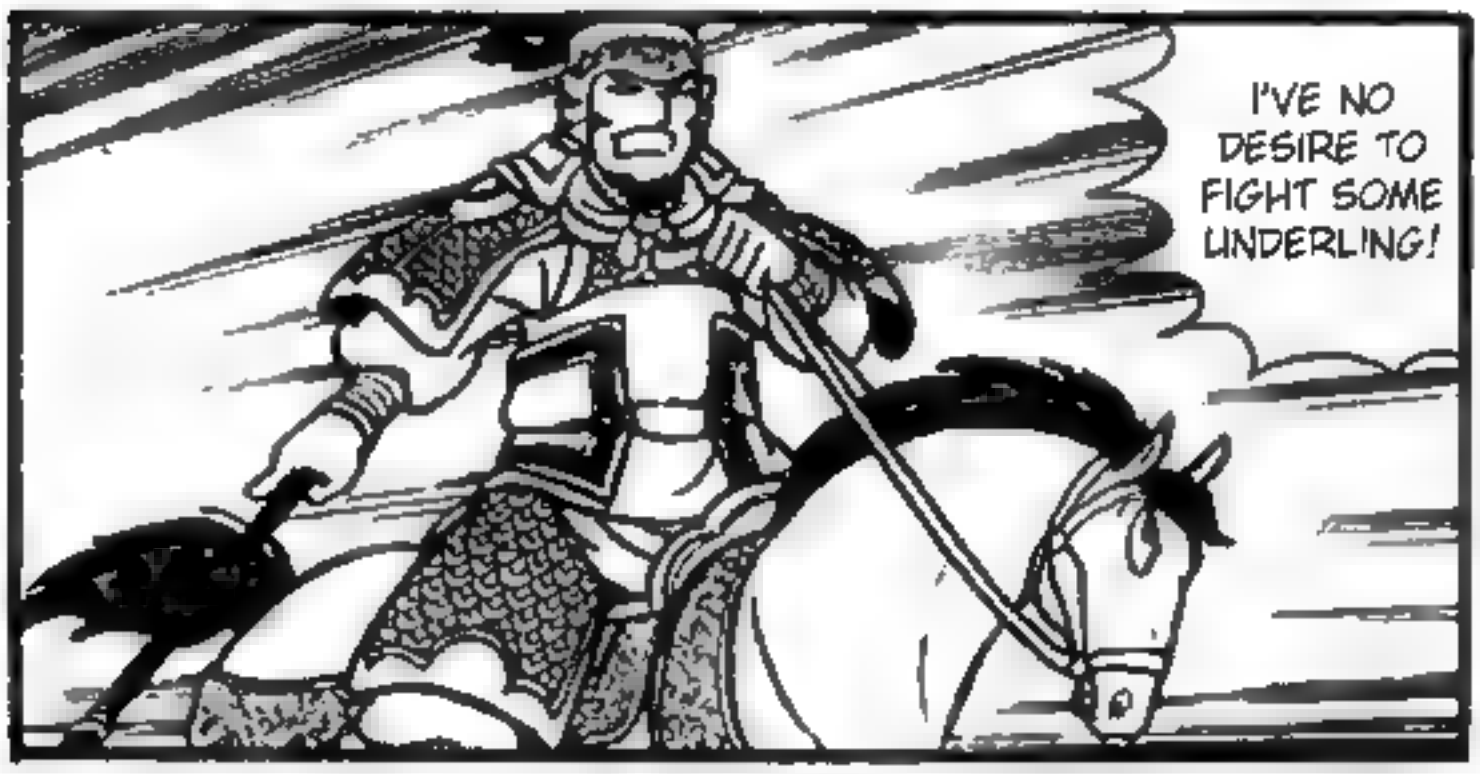
HMPH, THAT SHAMELESS BASTARD CAN SURE RUN...

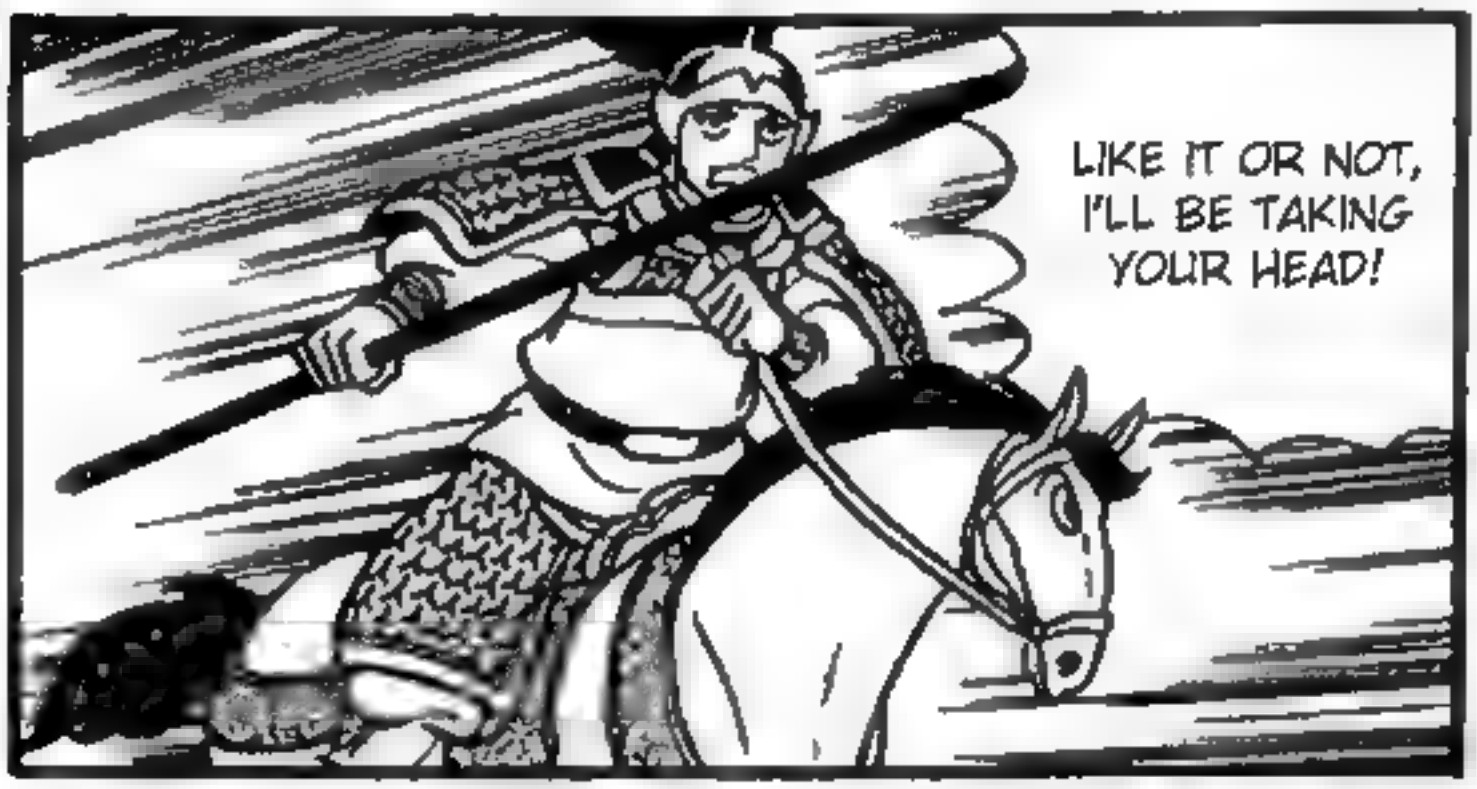
カッカッカッ

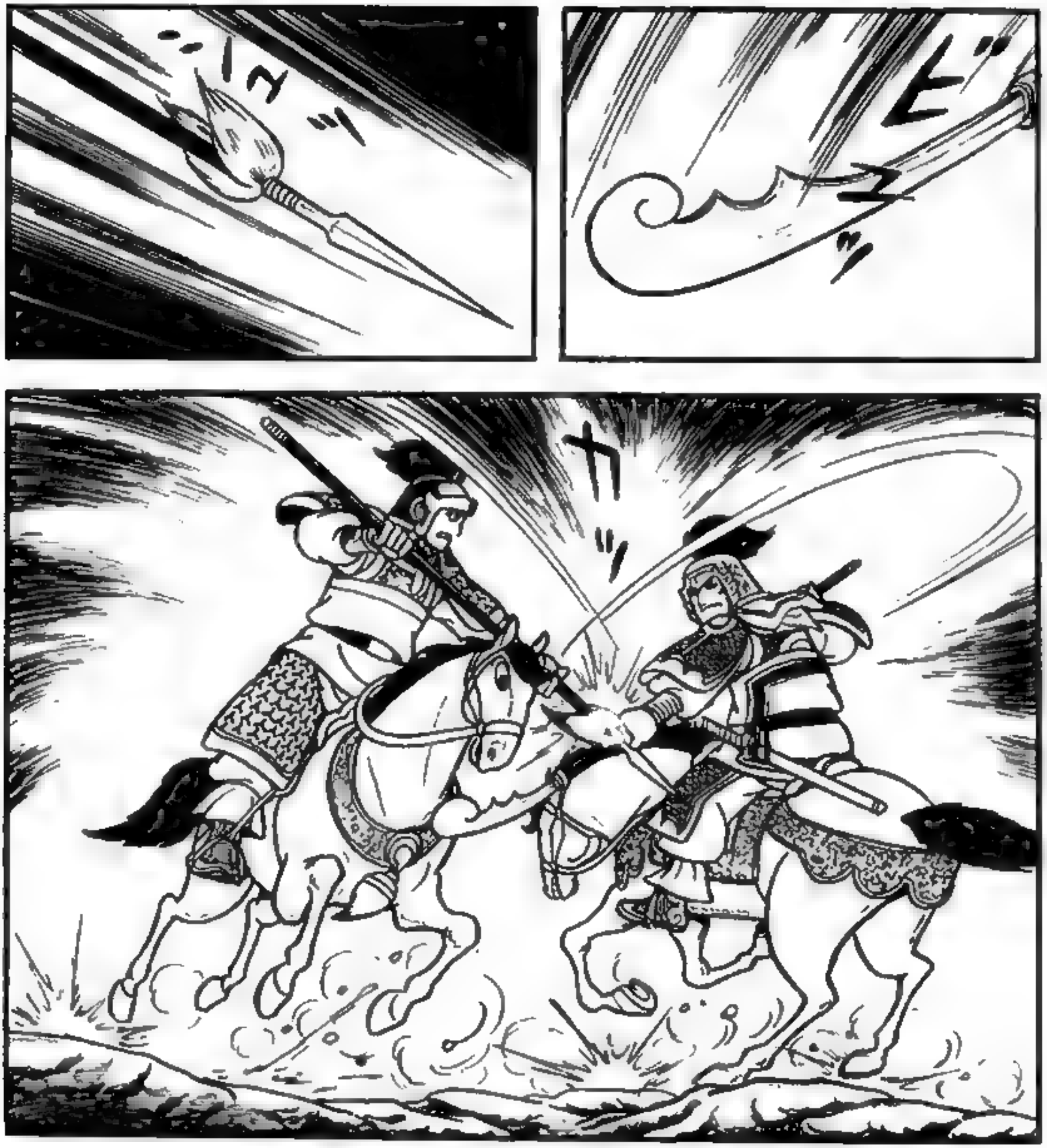
ZHOU YU! LET'S SETTLE THIS BETWEEN US COMMANDERS! COME OUT AND FIGHT!

カッカッカッ

THANK YOU, ZHOU TAI.
ALLOW ME, COMMANDER.


I'VE NO DESIRE TO FIGHT SOME UNDERLING!


LIKE IT OR NOT, I'LL BE TAKING YOUR HEAD!



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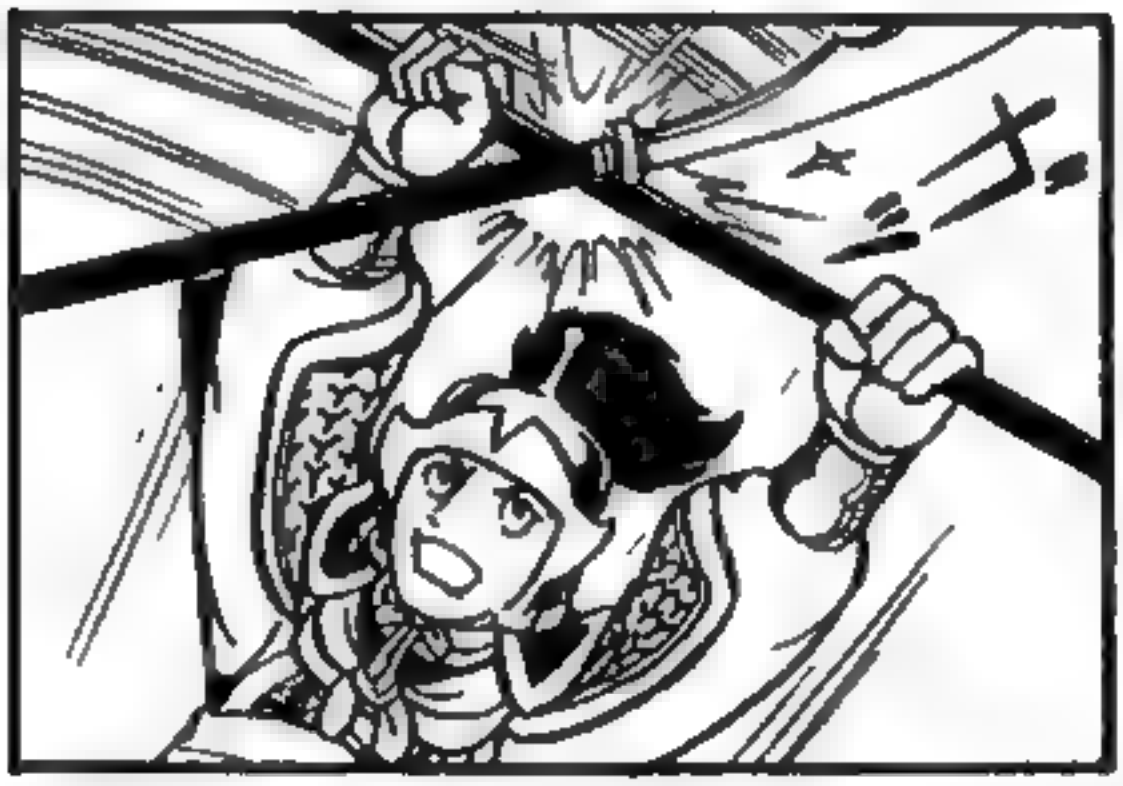
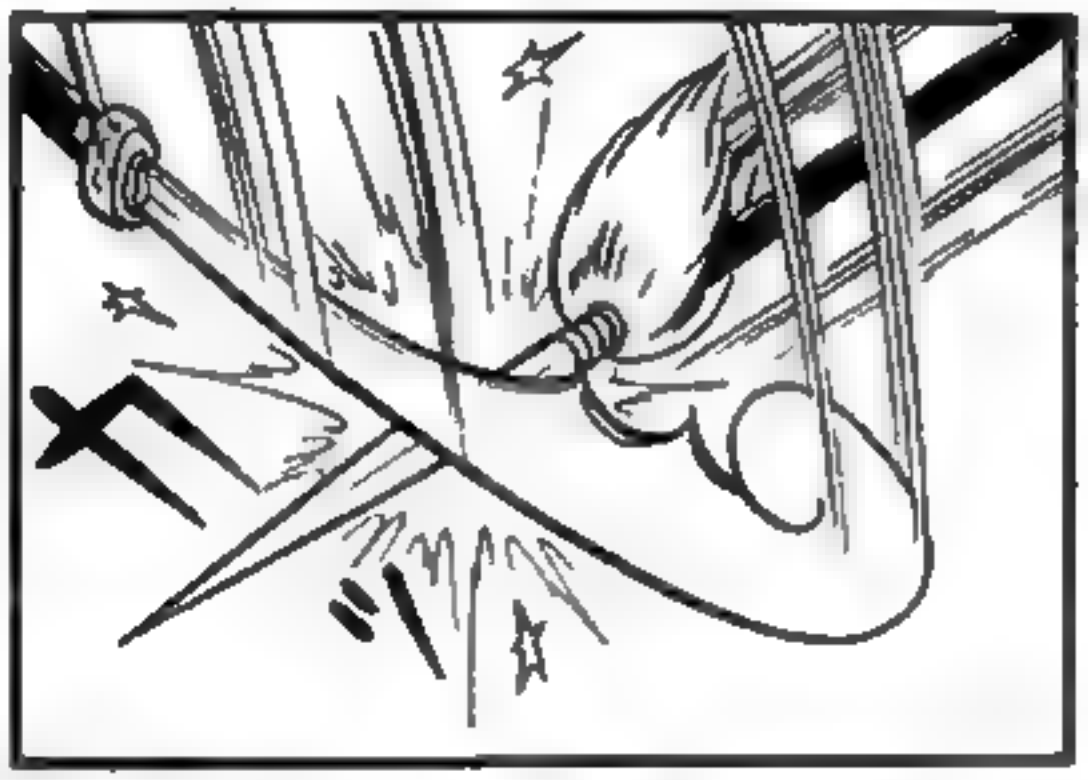
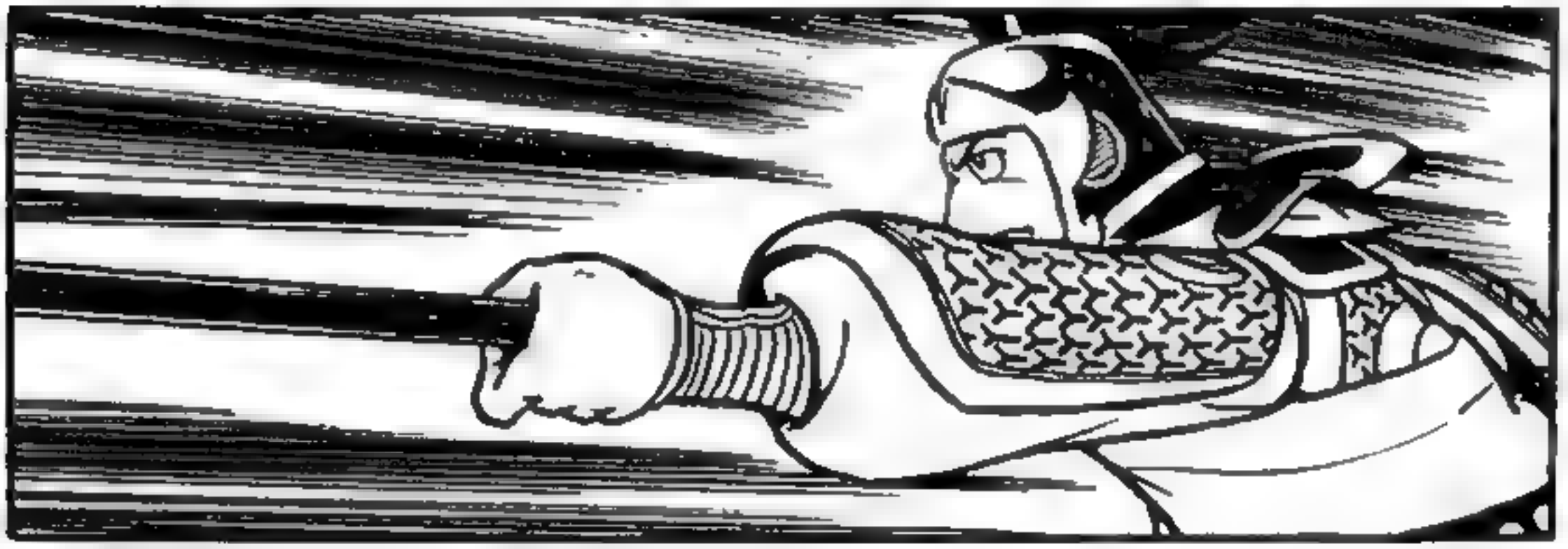






AGH!

UGH...

AHH!

IS RUNNING THE ONLY THING YOU NORTHERNERS CAN DO!?

EVEN OUR GENERAL'S RUNNING!

RUN FOR IT!

NOW'S OUR CHANCE!

HA, THEY'RE RUNNING JUST LIKE I THOUGHT THEY WOULD.

AGHHH!

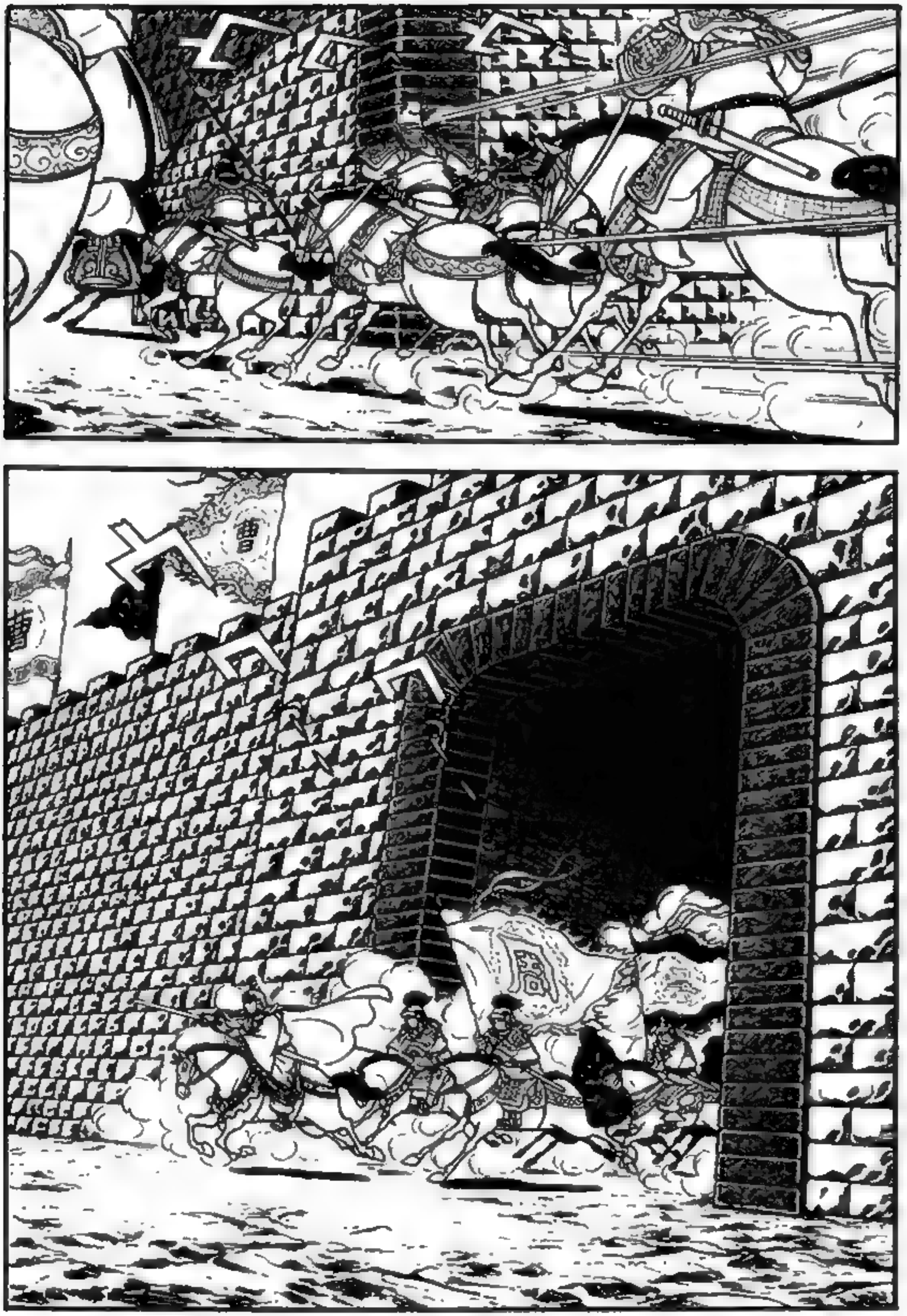
GAHHHHH!

COMMANDER, THE ENEMIES ARE ALL RUNNING NORTHWEST INSTEAD OF BACK INSIDE THE CASTLE!

HM?

NOW'S THE TIME TO TAKE NANJUN!

YES, THEY'VE BEEN PLANNING TO ABANDON THIS CASTLE ALL ALONG.

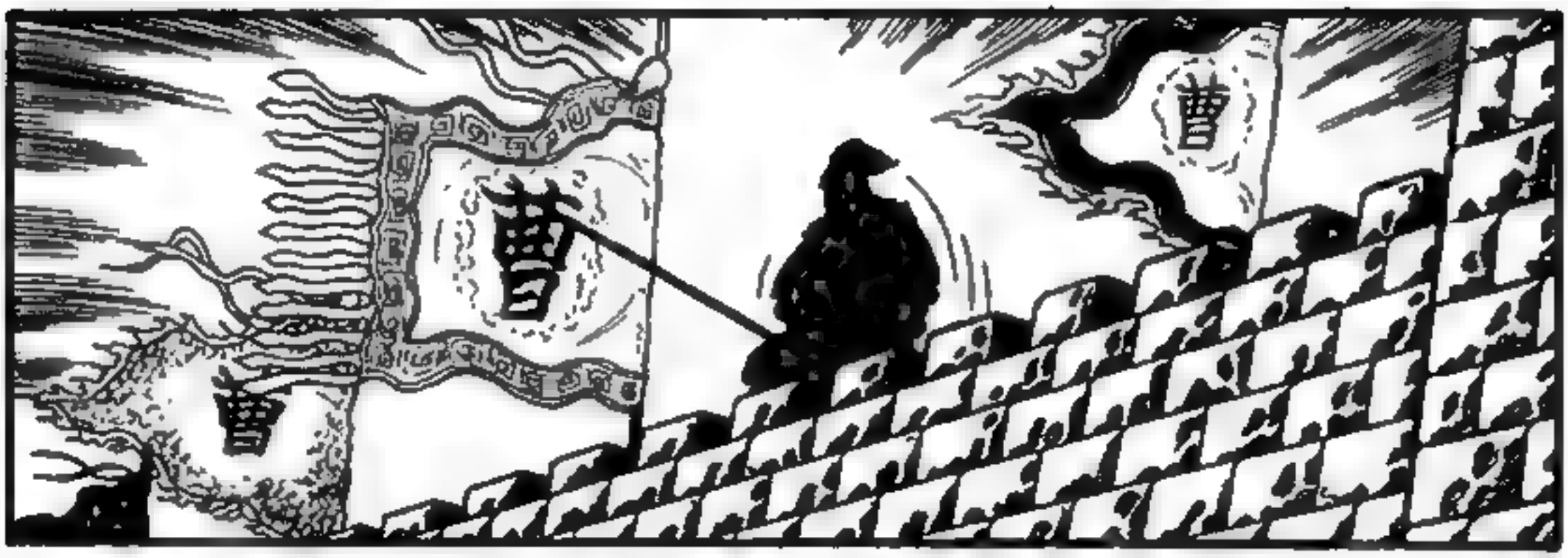


AGHHH!

IT'S A TRAP!

ACK!

AHH!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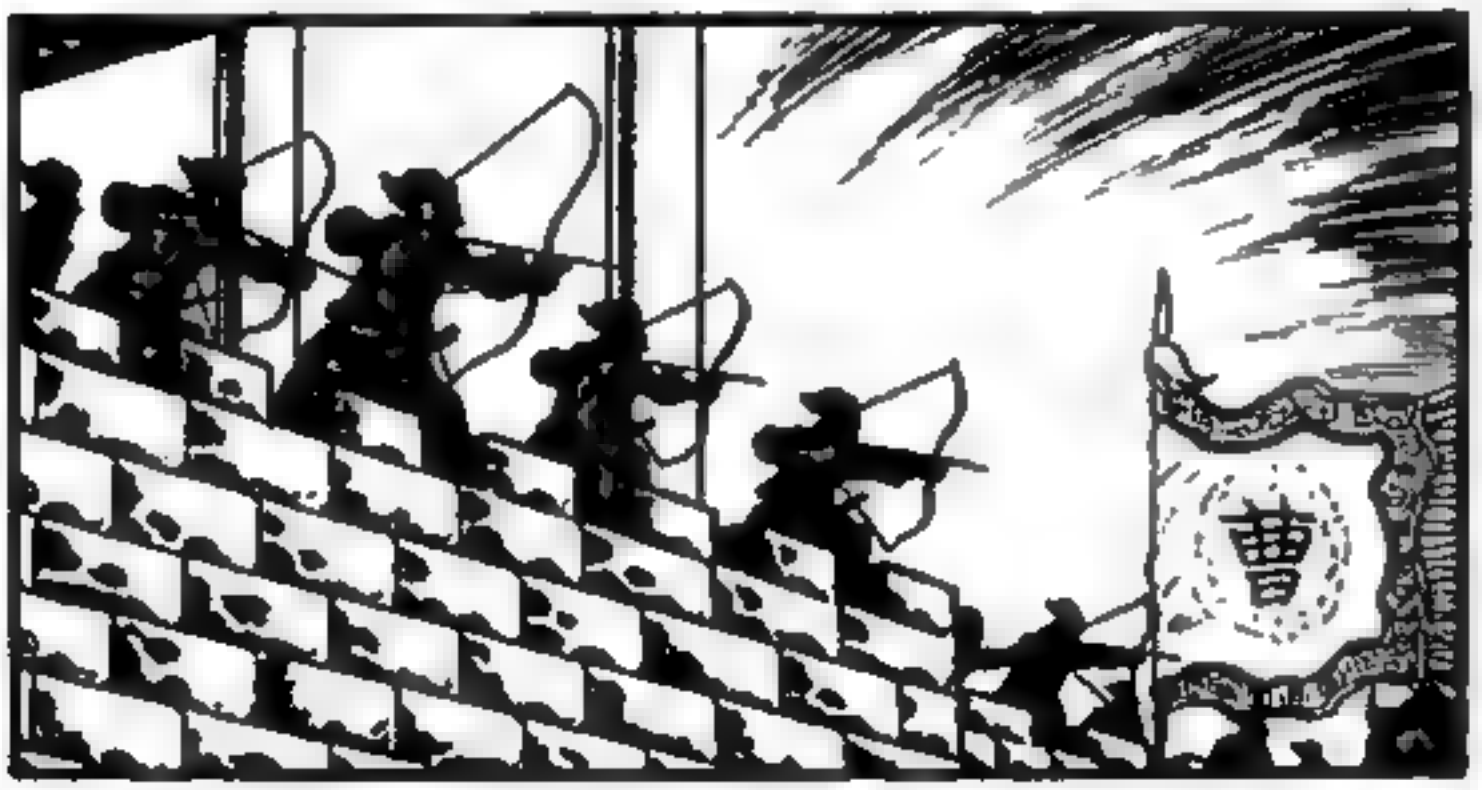
ARCHERS!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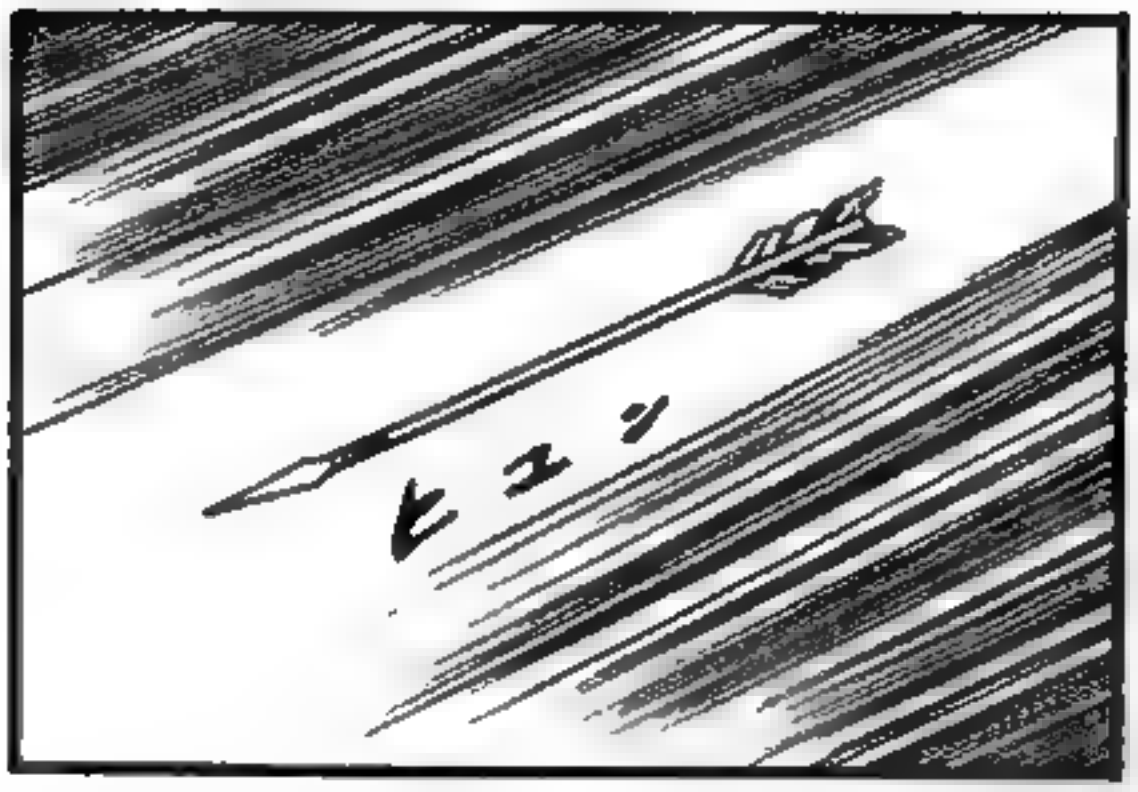
UGH!

GAH!

THANK YOU.

USE MY SHOULDERS TO CLIMB OUT OF THIS DITCH, COMMANDER!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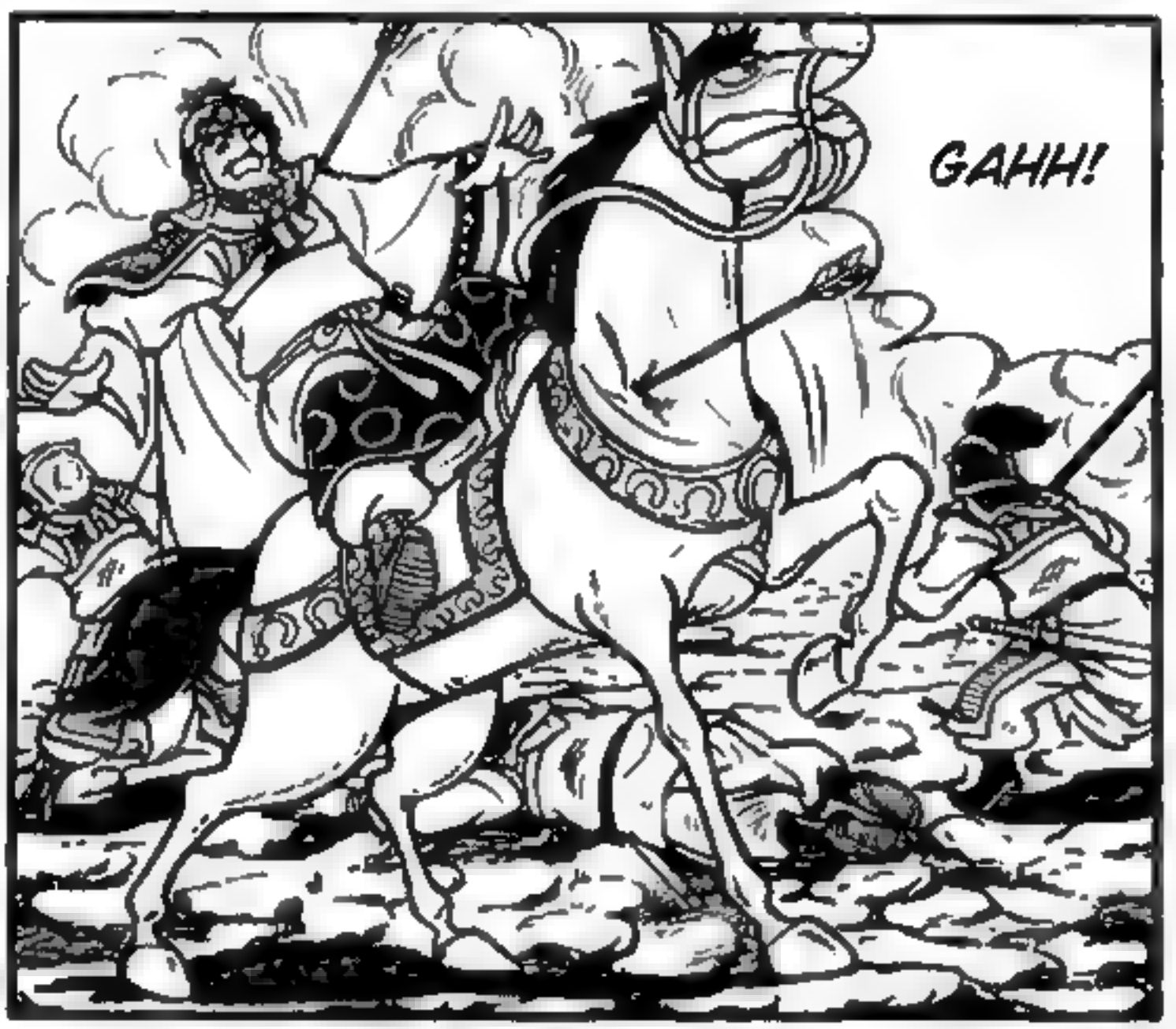
NOW'S MY CHANCE!
牛


GAHH!

呉
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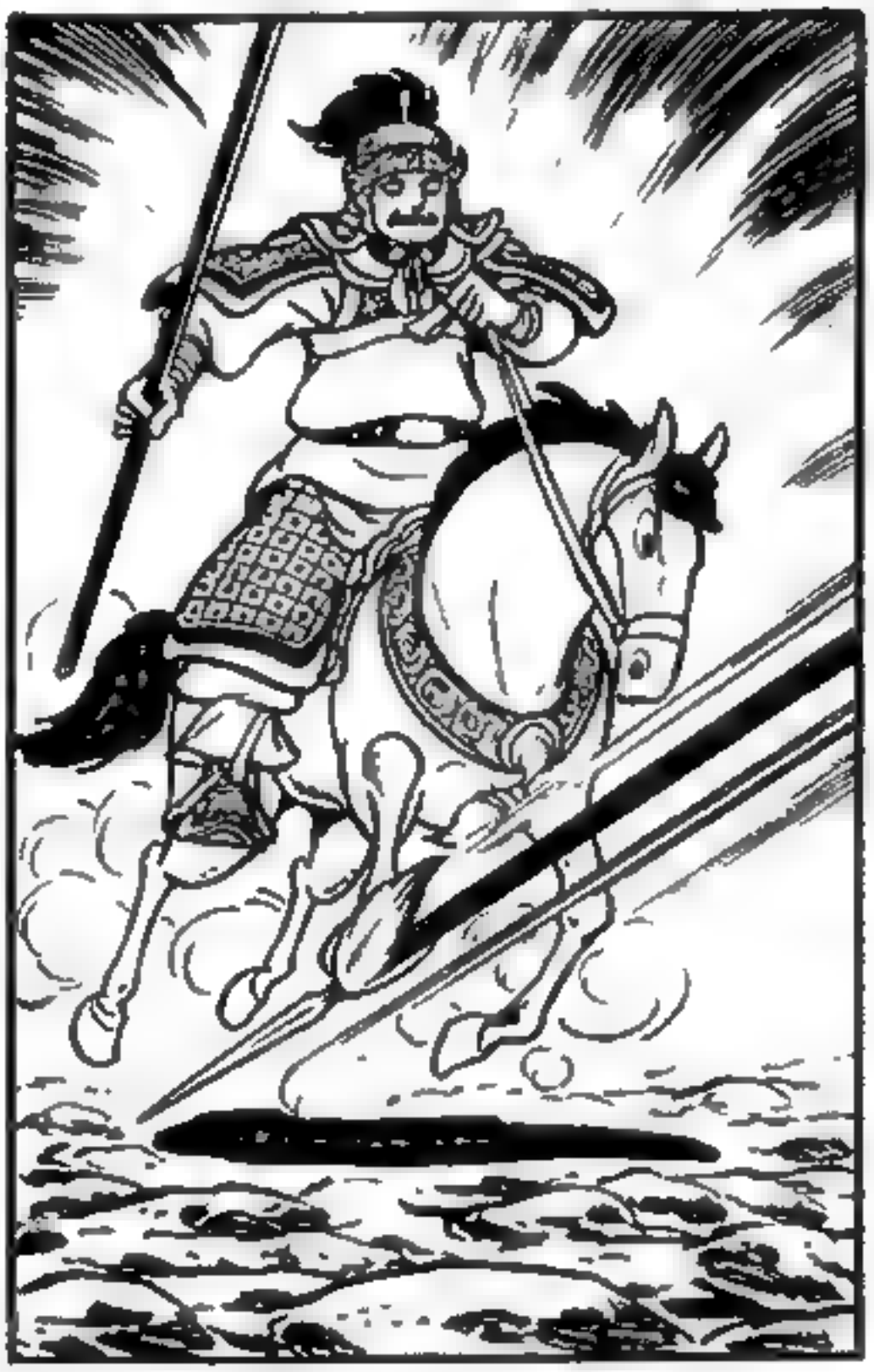
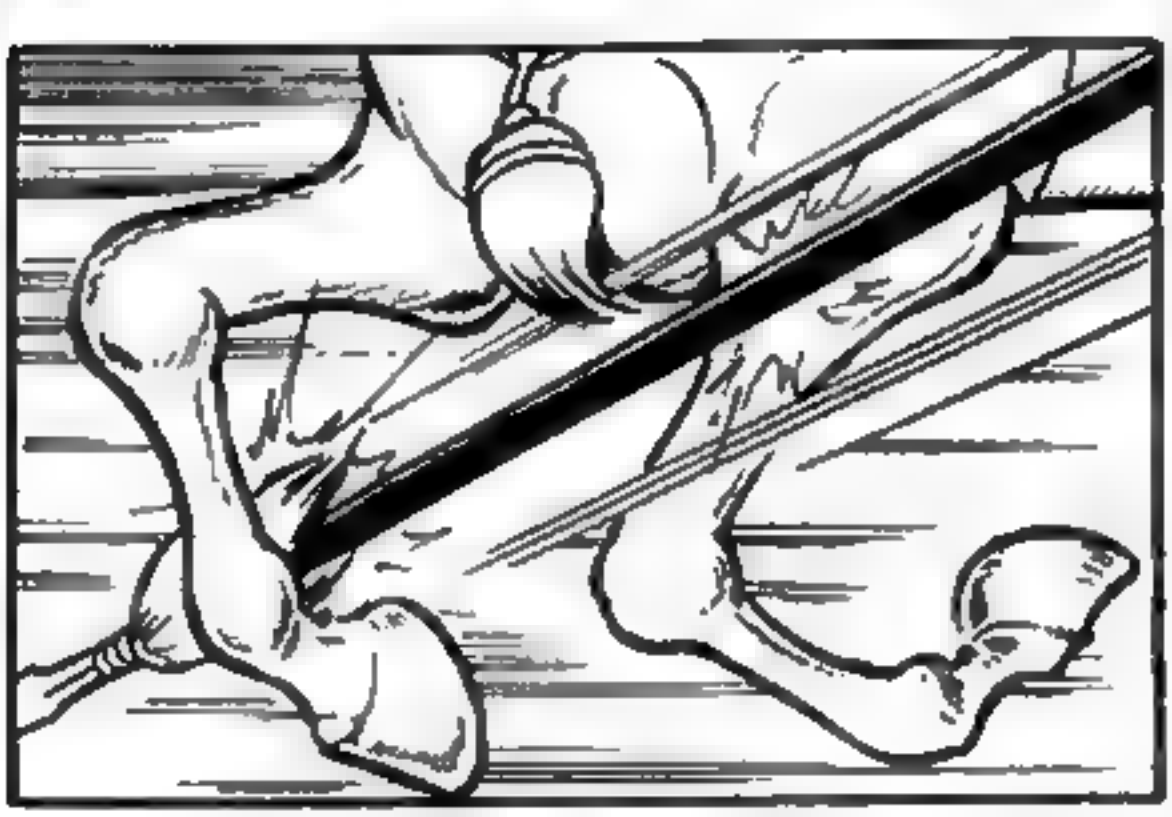
COMMA-
NDER!

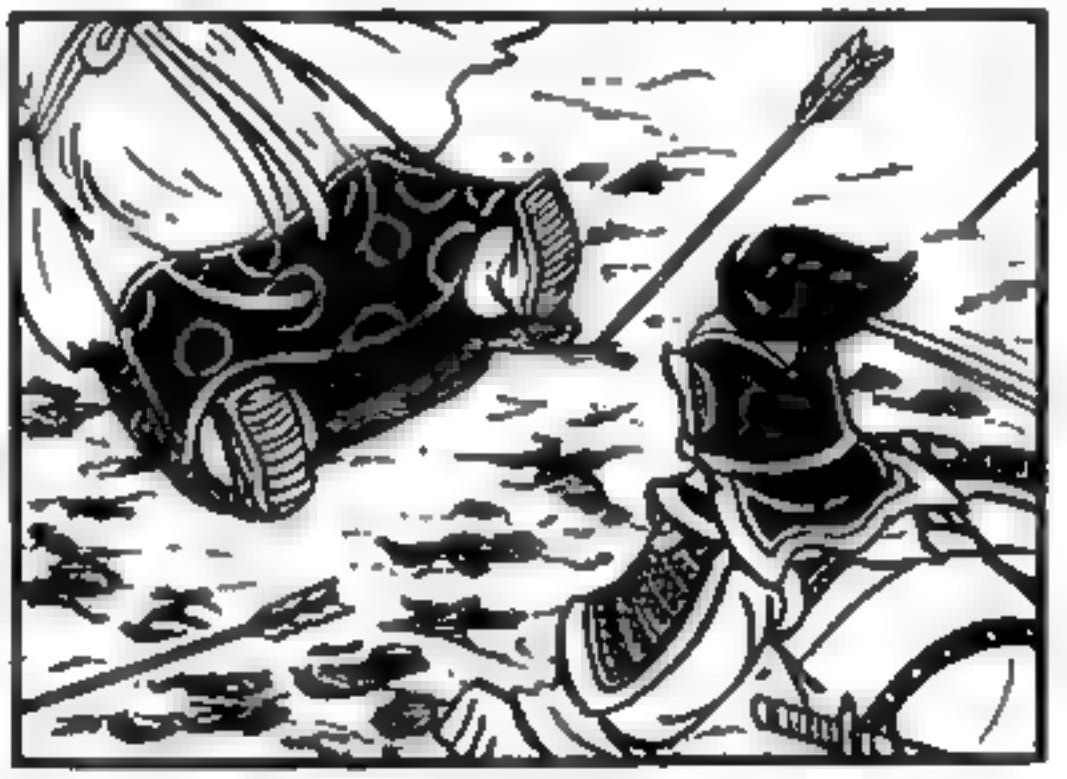
AHH!





SIR!

GOT IT!
TAKE THE COM-MANDER SAFELY BACK TO BASE!



SOUND THE RETREAT!

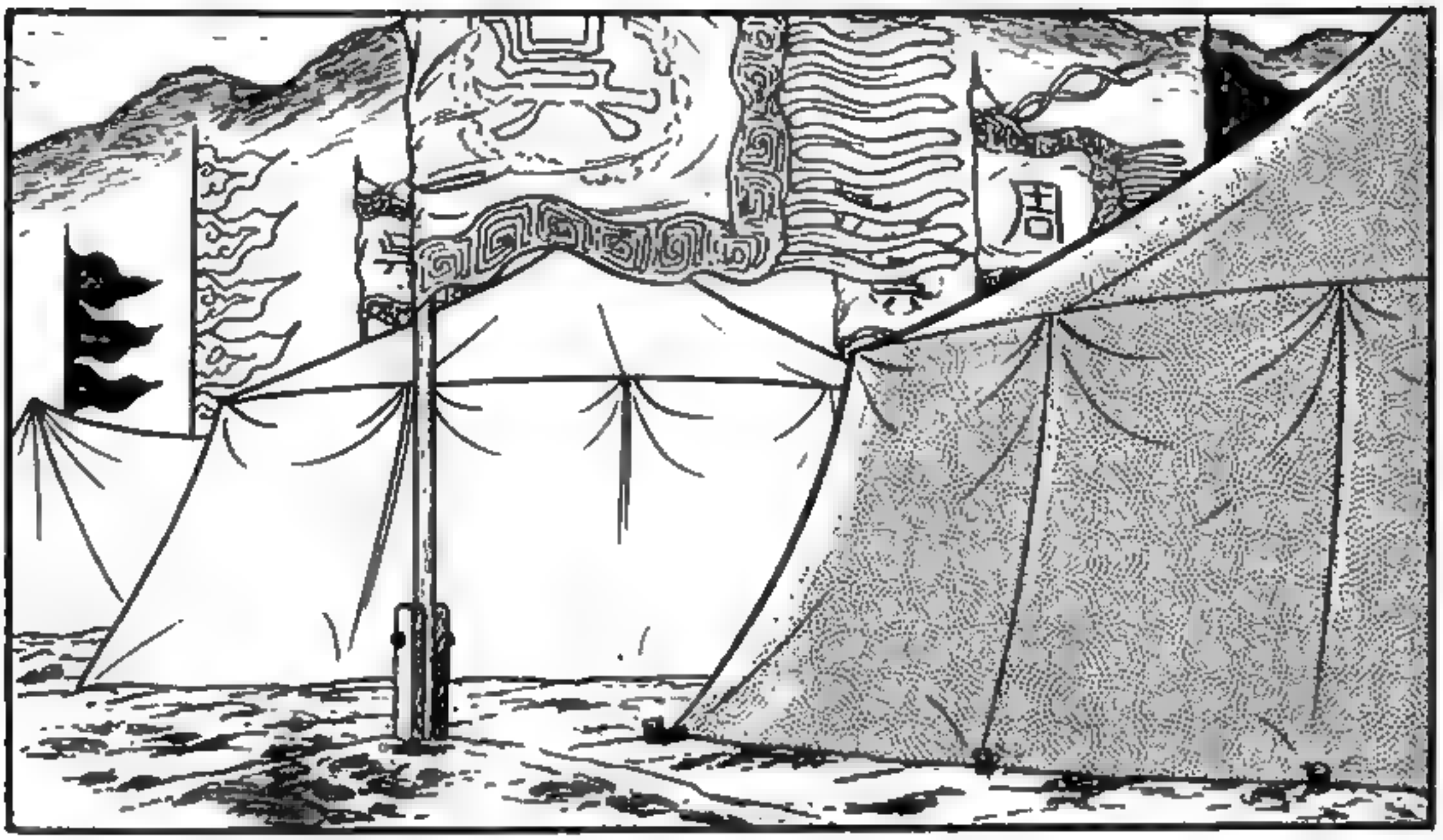
YES, SIR!

GIVE THE SIGNAL TO RETREAT!

OUR CHANCELLOR'S WISDOM IS TRULY PHENOMENAL...!

TO THINK THE PLAN WOULD SUCCEED THIS WELL...

DISPIRITED TROOPS



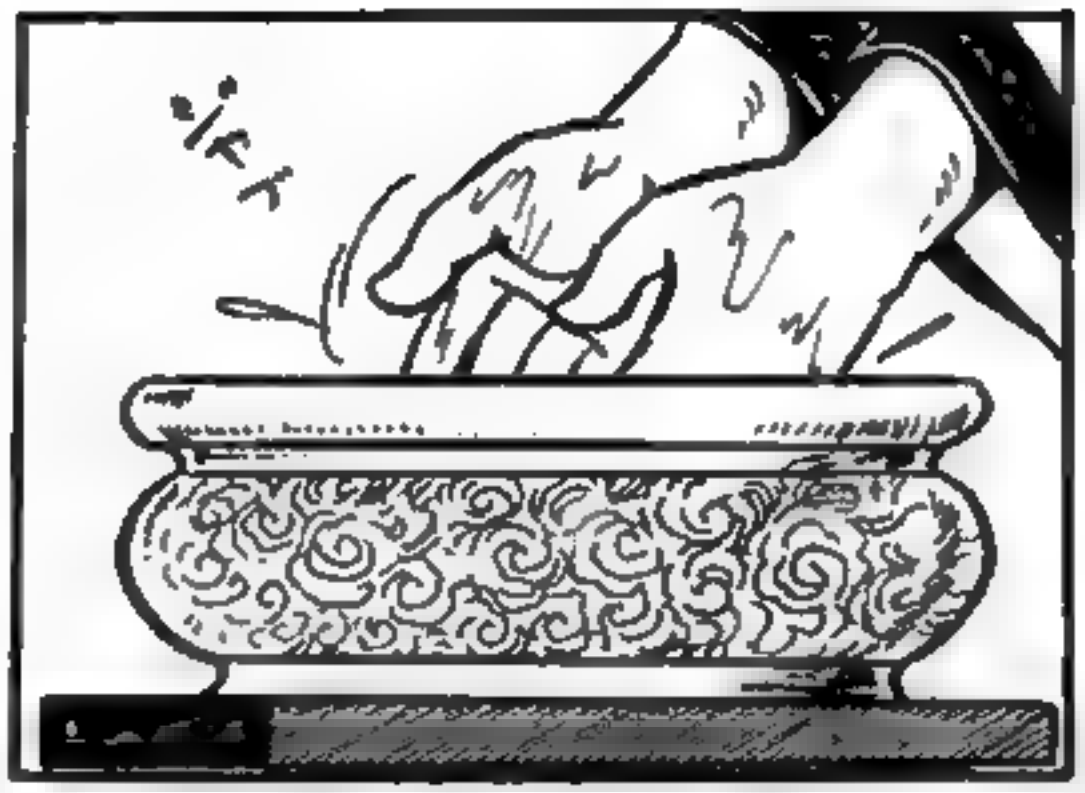
THE PERSON WHO REMOVED THE ARROW SEEMS TO HAVE DONE A POOR JOB AS THE ARROWHEAD BROKE OFF AND ITS FRAGMENT STILL LIES IN THE BONE.

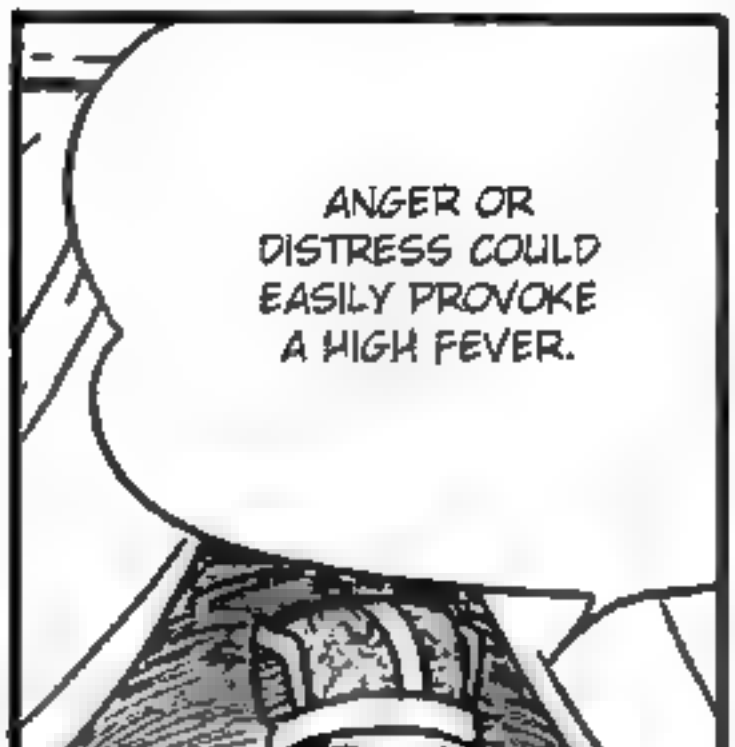
CUT INTO THE BONE!?

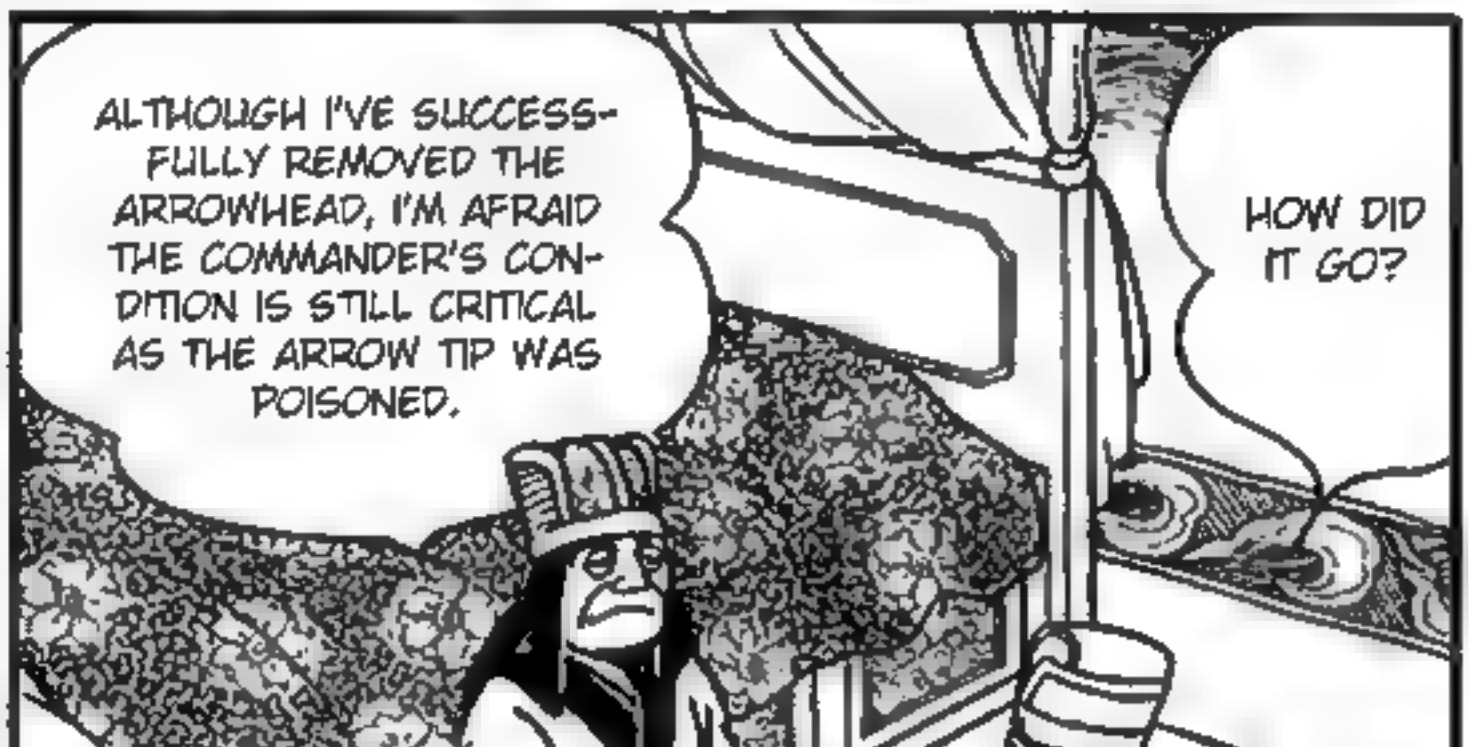
THE ONLY WAY TO REMOVE IT IS TO CUT INTO HIS BONE.

YES, DOCTOR.

BRING A HAMMER AND CHISEL.




ANGER OR DISTRESS COULD EASILY PROVOKE A HIGH FEVER.


ALTHOUGH I'VE SUCCESSFULLY REMOVED THE ARROWHEAD, I'M AFRAID THE COMMANDER'S CONDITION IS STILL CRITICAL AS THE ARROW TIP WAS POISONED.
HOW DID IT GO?

ALRIGHT, I'LL HAVE THE TROOPS REMAIN ON THE DEFENSIVE WHILE THE COMMANDER RECUPERATES.
AS SUCH, IT IS IMPERATIVE FOR HIM TO REST.

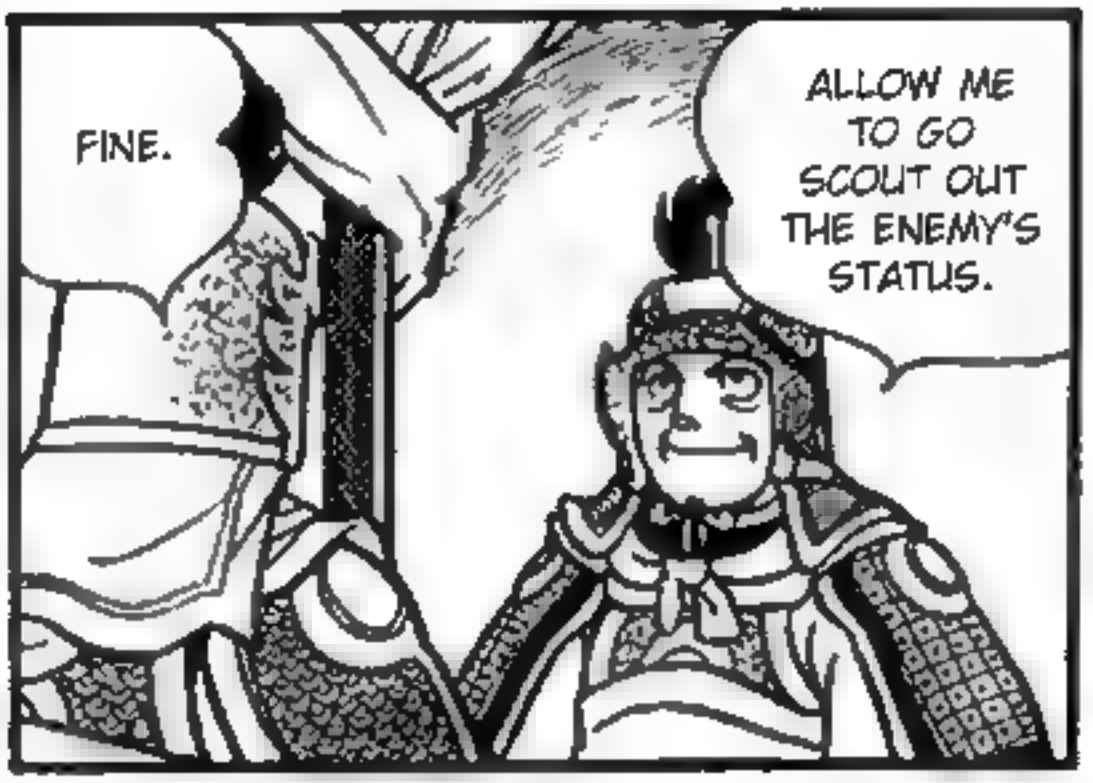
YES, I SAW IT WITH MY OWN TWO EYES! AND I WAS JUST A STEP AWAY FROM TAKING HIS HEAD ONCE AND FOR ALL...

ARE YOU SURE ZHOU YU WAS SHOT BY AN ARROW?

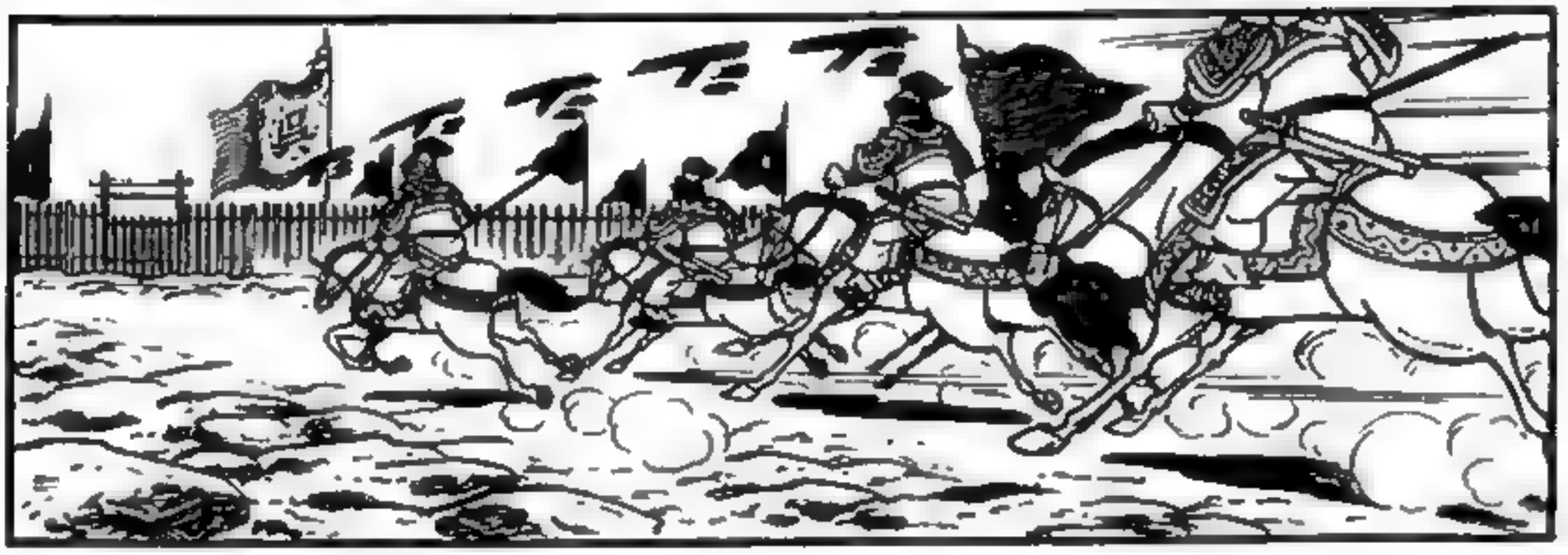
IF HE REALLY DID DIE, THEN THIS IS THE PERFECT CHANCE TO WIPE OUT THE ENEMIES!

A ZHOU YU-LESS WU IS NOTHING TO FEAR.

UNDER-
STOOD,
SIR.
JUST BE
SURE NOT TO
GET TOO
RECKLESS.


FINE.
ALLOW ME
TO GO
SCOUT OUT
THE ENEMY'S
STATUS.

AFTER
ME!



YES.

SOME-THING IS OFF, SIR.

HOW ODD THAT THERE ISN'T A SINGLE WU SOLDIER COMING OUT TO MEET US...!

吳

HOW FRUST-RATING!

CURSES... IF IT WEREN'T FOR OUR COMMANDER'S HEALTH, I WOULD GO OUT AND CRUSH THEM AT ONCE...

I CAN'T SAY FOR CERTAIN...

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE REASON FOR THE ENEMY'S SUDDEN PASSIVENESS, GENERAL NIU JIN?

牛

IN ANY CASE, LET'S RETURN FOR TODAY AND REPORT OUR FINDINGS.

RETREAT!

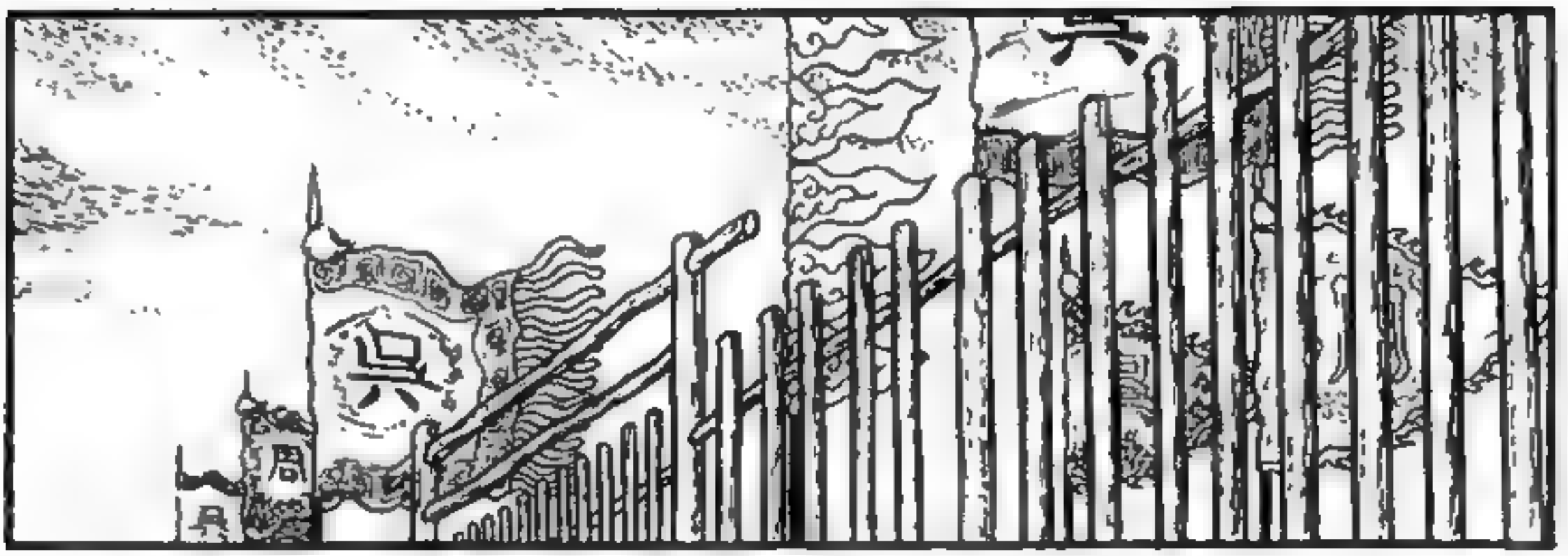
YES, SIR. WHATEVER THE REASON IS, IT MUST BE CRITICAL.

THEY DIDN'T EVEN TH'NK OF COMING OUT FROM THEIR ENCAMPMENTS?

GO PROVOKE THEM SO WE CAN FIND OUT MORE.

COULD IT BE THAT ZHOU YU HAS ALREADY DIED BUT THEY'RE KEEPING IT A SECRET FROM US...?

LEAVE IT TO ME, SIR. I'LL HAVE THEM WU SOLDIERS FUMING UNTIL THEY REVEAL THEIR SECRETS TO US.



WHAT'S THE MATTER!? HAVE YOU LOST ALL WILL TO FIGHT AFTER BEING TROUNCED SO THOROUGHLY BY US!?

SURRENDER NOW AND WE'LL AT LEAST SPARE YOUR WORTHLESS LIVES! IF YOU WON'T FIGHT NOR SURRENDER, THEN THROW ASIDE YOUR FLAGS AND RUN BACK TO YOUR HOMES!

AHAHAHA!

HAHA!

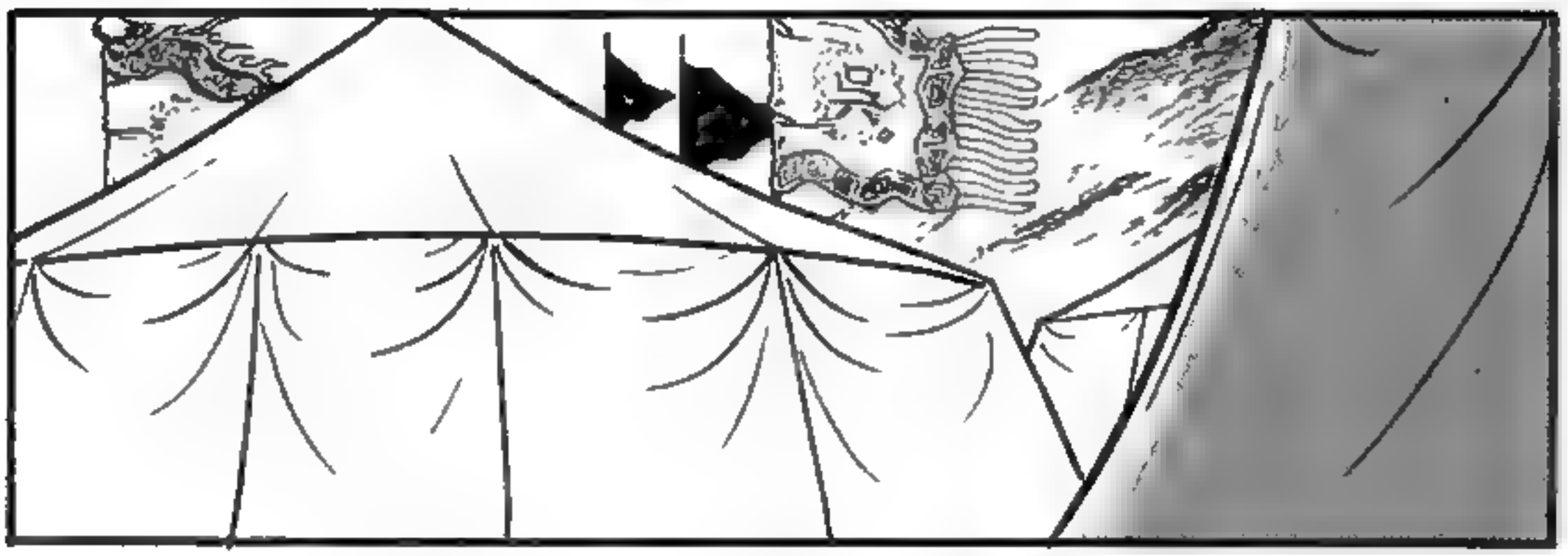
HA HA HA

HA HA HA HA

MEN! POINT AND LAUGH AT THESE COWARDLY SOUTHERN HICKS!

IF ONLY WE WEREN'T UNDER DIRECT ORDERS TO NOT ATTACK...

CURSE THEM ALL TO HELL...!



I'M AFRAID THE DOCTOR SPECIFICALLY SAID THE COMMANDER'S CONDITION WILL WORSEN IF ANY EXTERNAL FACTORS PROVOKE HIS EMOTIONS.

PLEASE LET US FIGHT.
WE CANNOT STAND THIS INSULT TO OUR HONOUR ANY LONGER!

WHY NOT?
I'M AFRAID WE CAN'T DO THAT EITHER.

THEN I SUGGEST WE RETREAT BACK TO WU AND RELAUNCH OUR OFFENSIVE WHEN THE COMMANDER HAS FULLY RECUPERATED.

WHAT!?

THE COMMANDER HAS PROMISED LIU BEI THAT HE COULD TRY TO TAKE NANJUN FOR HIMSELF IF WE COULD NOT...

YES, THAT'S EXACTLY WHY WE CAN'T RETREAT EITHER.

BUT THAT WOULD MAKE ALL OUR LOSSES FOR NOUGHT!

WHAT TO DO...

MNN...

曹仁
YES, NOT A SINGLE ONE OF OUR JEERS OR INSULTS MANAGED TO PROVOKE THEM.
THE ENEMIES STILL SHOW NO SIGNS OF ATTACKING?
MAYBE ZHOU YU REALLY HAS PASSED AWAY?
THAT MAKES IT THE 7TH DAY IN A ROW.

FINALLY!

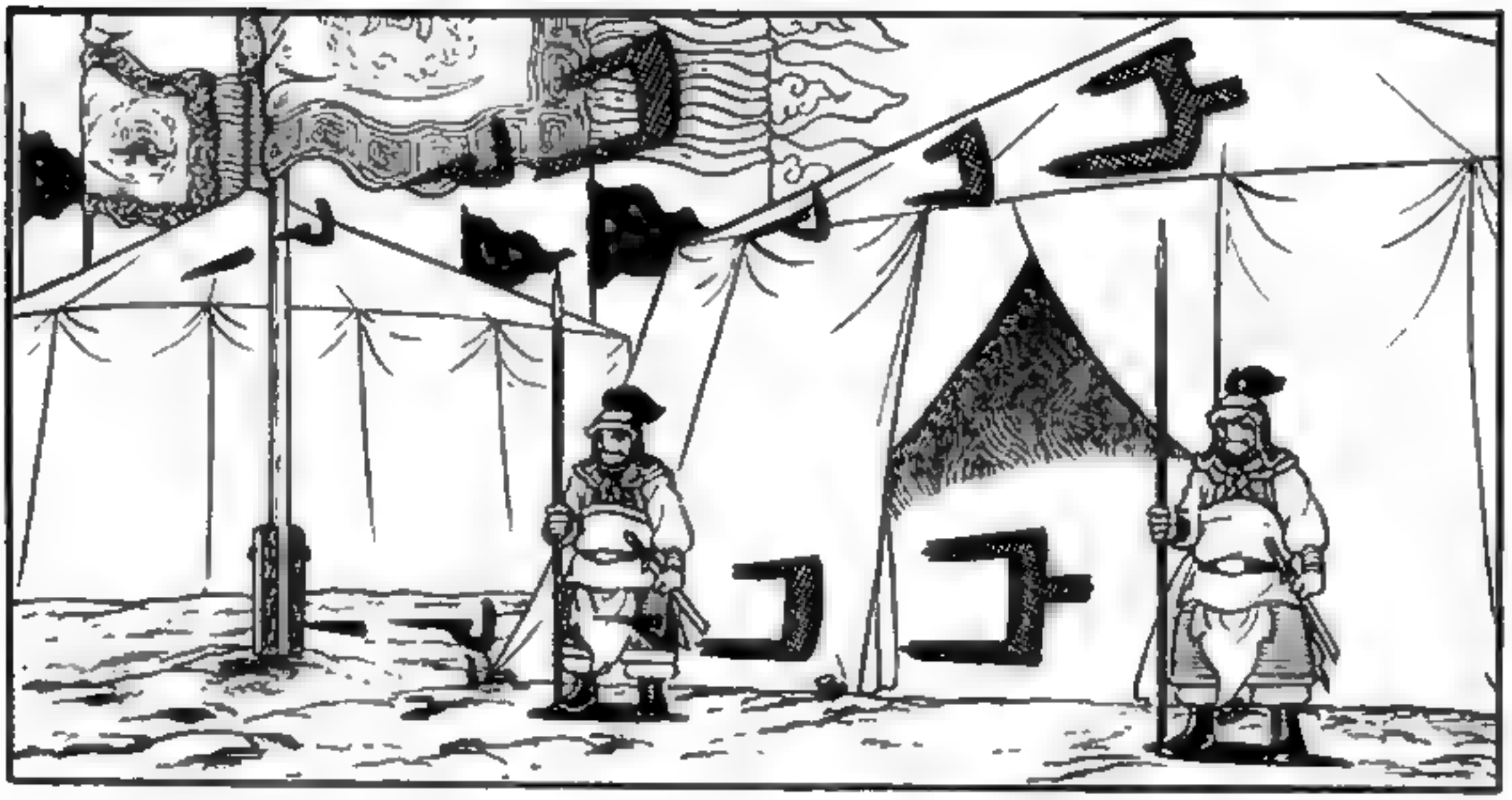
WE SHALL ATTEMPT AN ATTACK TOMORROW.

CHARGE!

THE ENEMIES HAVE COME OUT OF THEIR CASTLE FOR A FULL-SCALE ATTACK!

AHH!

READY THE TROOPS!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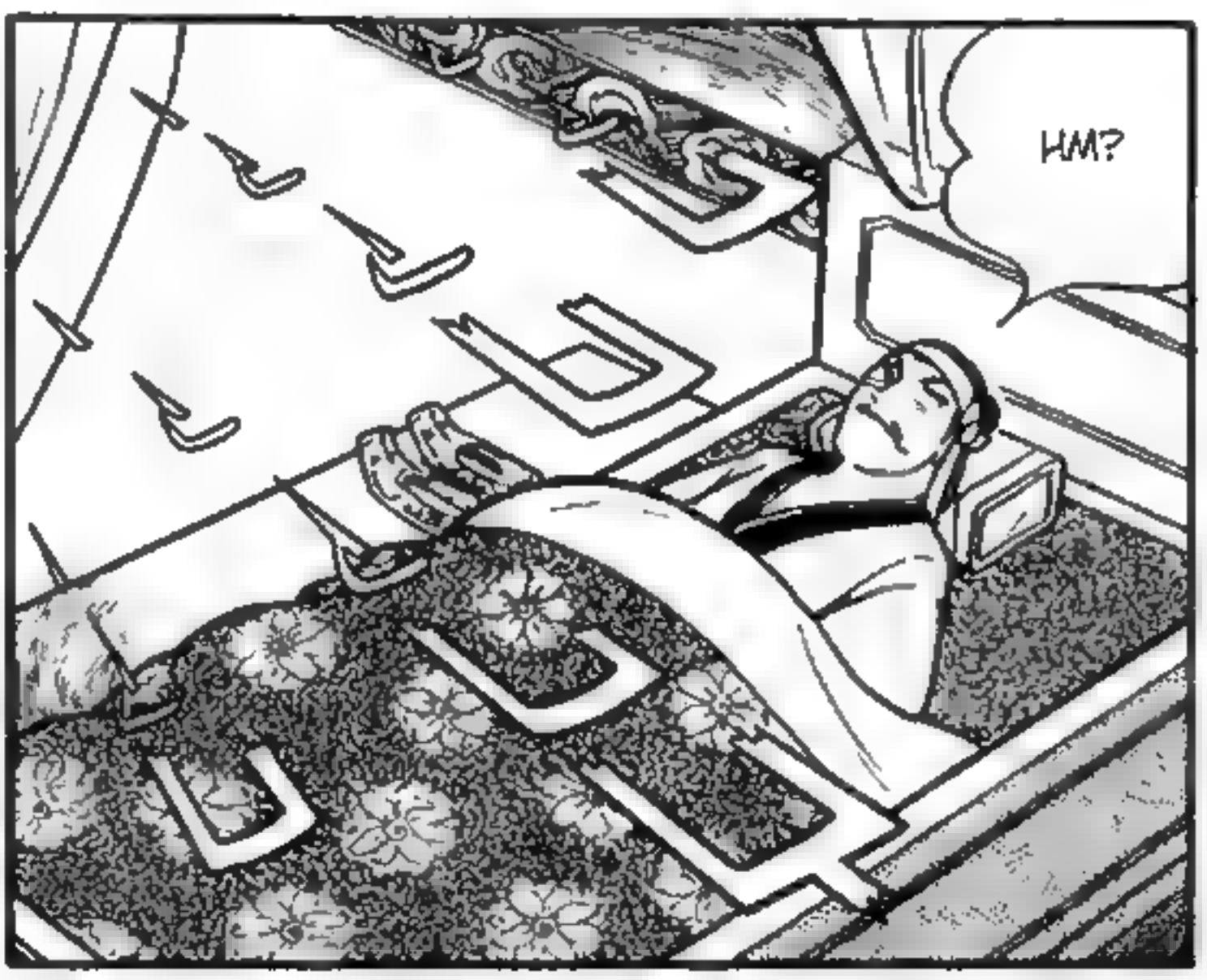
WHAT'S THIS YELLING I HEAR?


HM?

IS IT, NOW!?

T-THAT'S MERELY THE SOUND OF OUR SOLDIERS DRILLING, COMMANDER.

THERE'S NO NEED TO LIE FOR MY SAKE.

TO DIE FIGHTING ON THE BATTLE-FIELD IS A FINE END FOR ANY TRUE WARRIOR.

Y-YES, SIR.

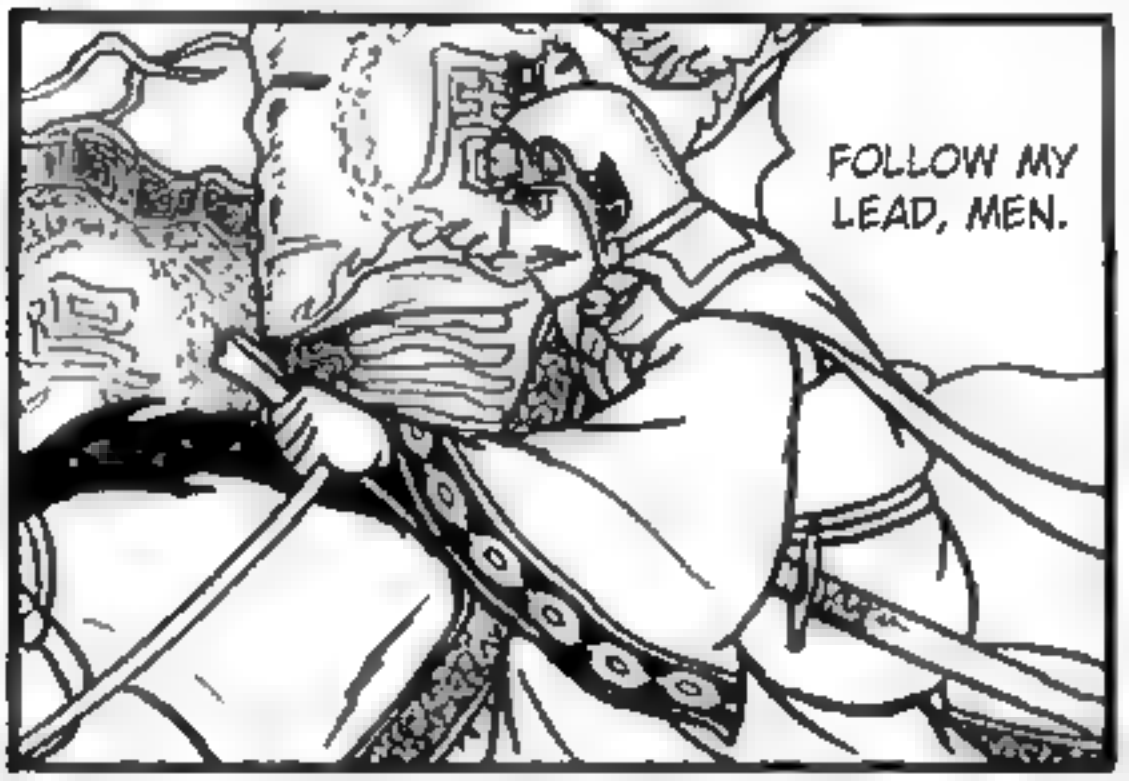
YOU SERIOUSLY MEAN TO SAY THOSE SHOUTS ARE FROM ROUTINE DRILLS?

B-BUT...

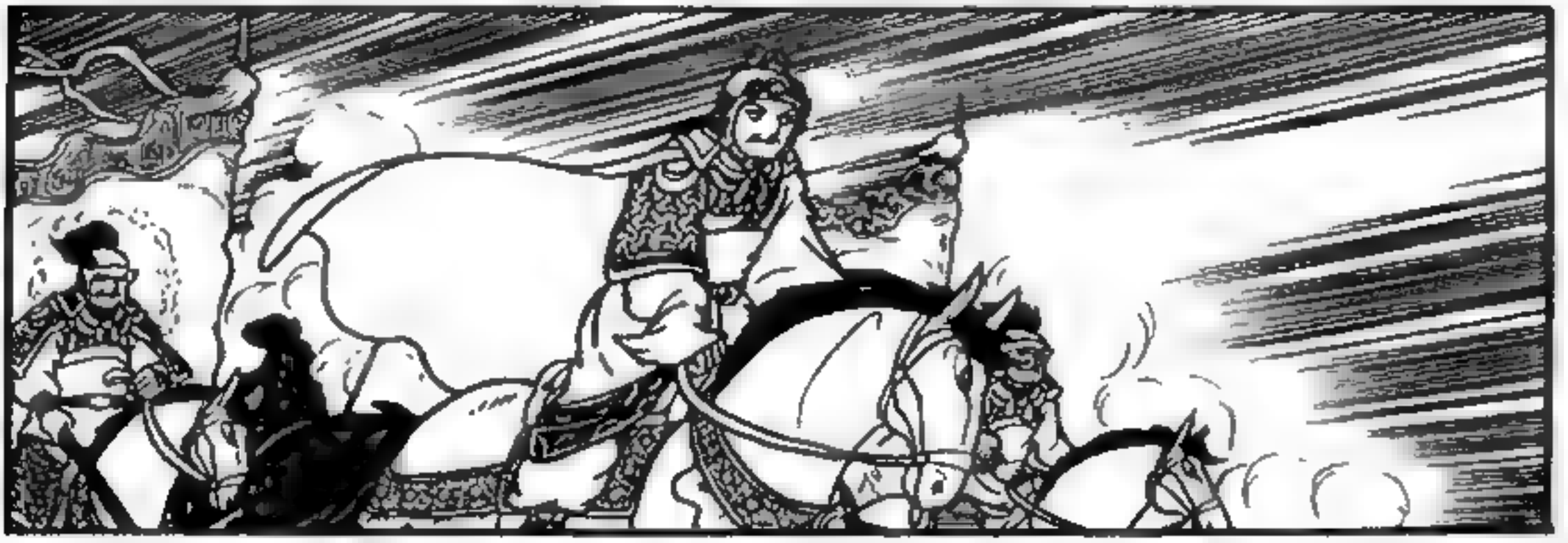
BRING ME MY SWORD AND ARMOUR!

Y-YES, SIR!

THAT'S AN ORDER!


FOLLOW MY LEAD, MEN.

AH, COM-MANDER!



SIR, OVER THERE!

AH!

AH!

SO HE STILL HASN'T CROAKED, HAS HE NOW...

IT'S ZHOU YU!
AGHH!

IT'S TRUE THAT HE WAS HIT BY AN ARROW. I DOUBT HE COULD HAVE FULLY RECOVERED SO QUICKLY.

DO NOT PANIC, MEN!

POUR ON THE INSULTS TO ZHOU YU!

IF SO, STRESS CAN EASILY EXACERBATE AN UNHEALED WOUND.

DID THAT ARROW TASTE GOOD ENOUGH FOR YA?
HEY, PRETTY BOY! HOW YA FEELIN'!?

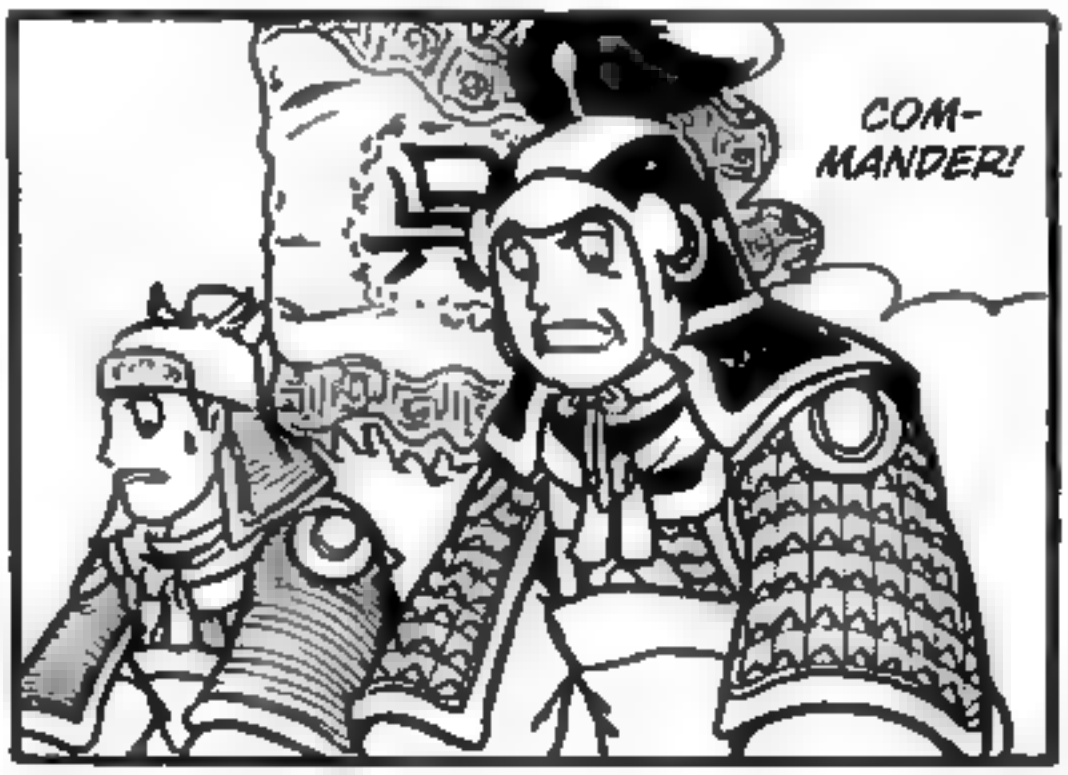
A JOKE LIKE YOU SHOULD GET OFF THE BATTLEFIELD!
I BET YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE THE STRENGTH TO HOLD A SPEAR NOW!

THOSE INSUFFER-ABLE SCUM...
NGHH...

UGH!

URGH...

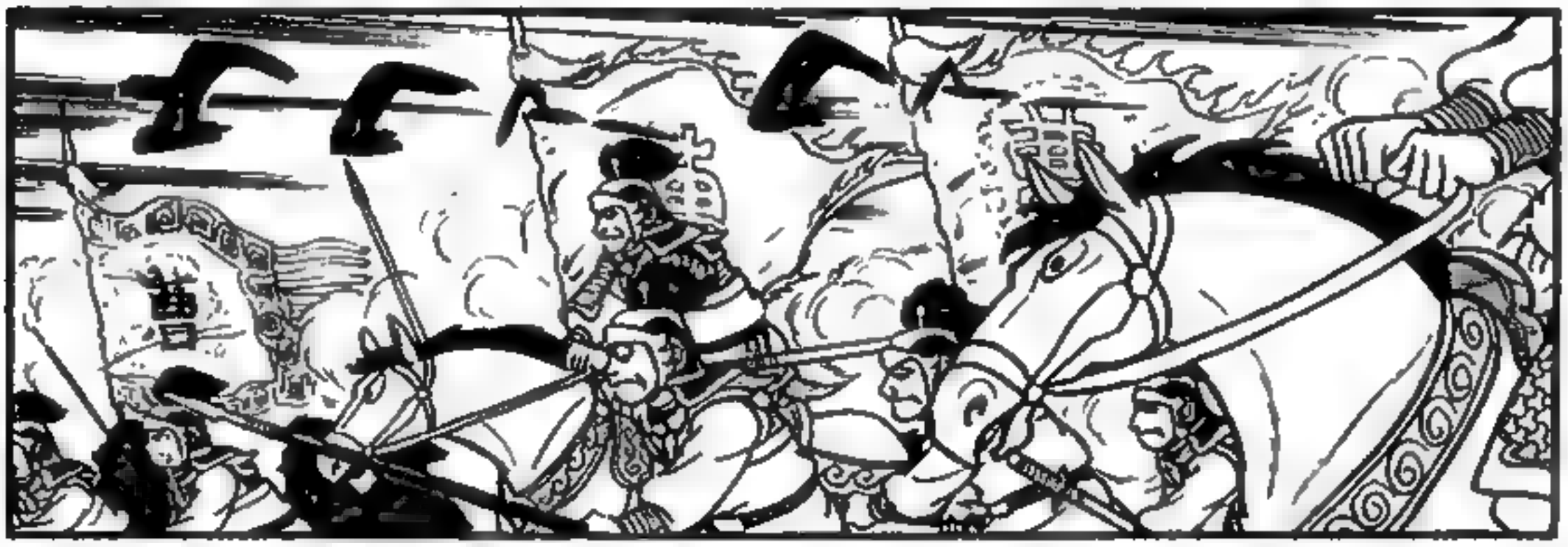
SIR!

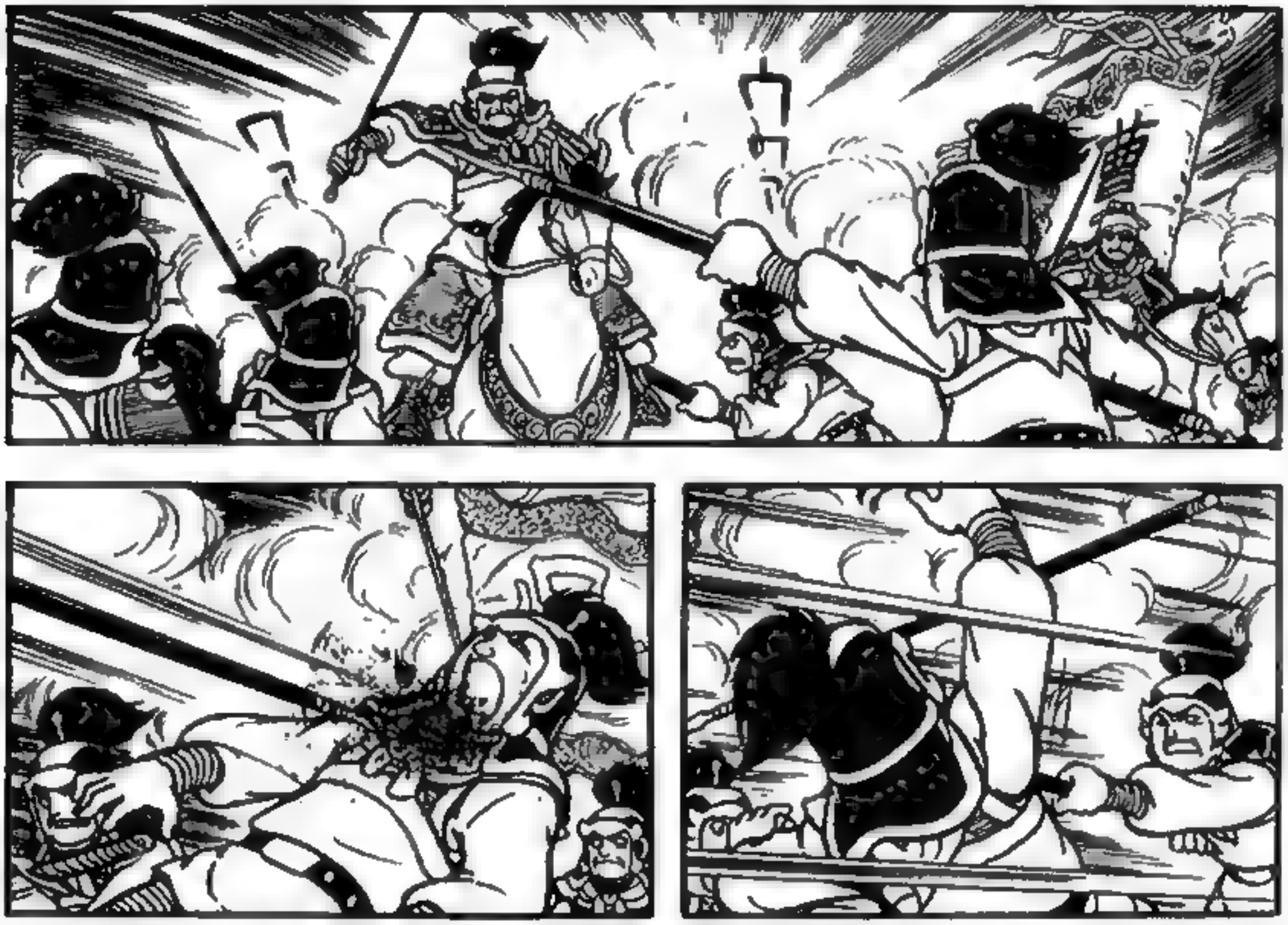

COM-
MANDER!

TAKE HIM
AWAY
FROM
HERE AT
ONCE!

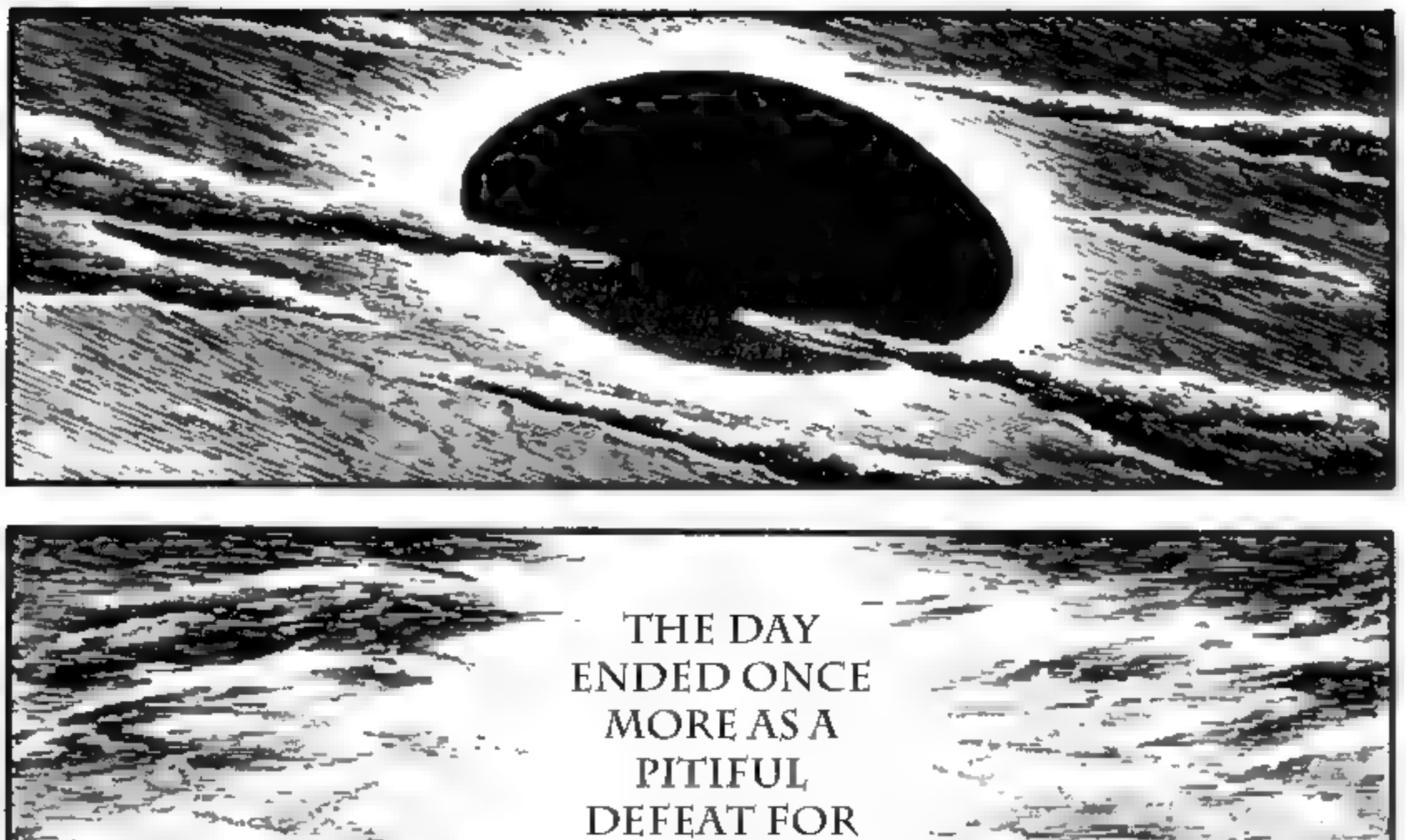
NOW'S
OUR
CHANCE!

HA, EXACTLY
AS I
THOUGHT!

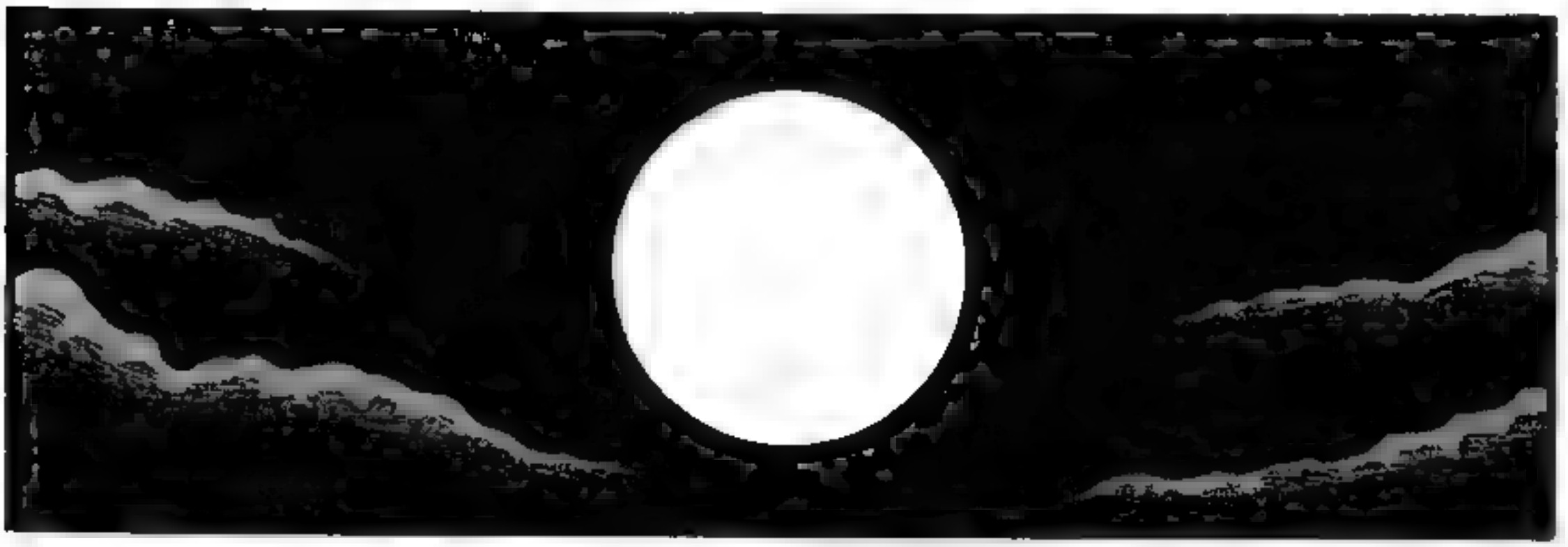


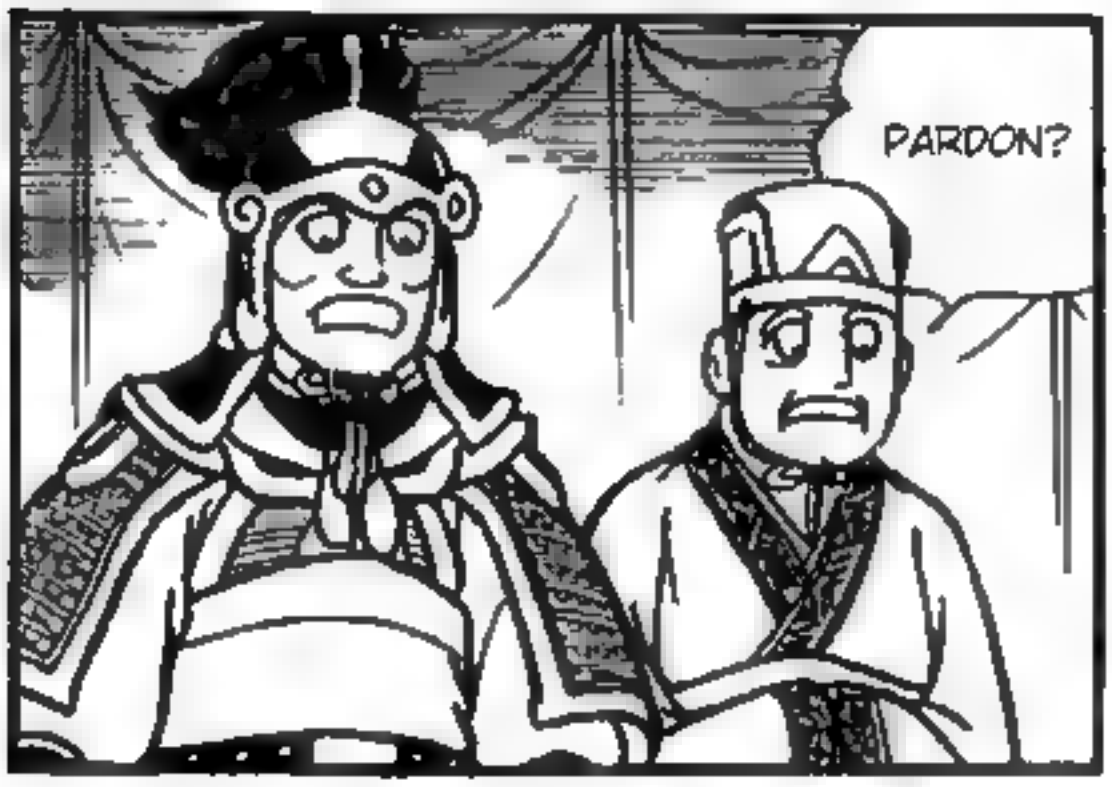


RETREAT!
RETREAT
BACK INSIDE!


THE DAY ENDED ONCE MORE AS A PITIFUL DEFEAT FOR WU.

WITHOUT A DROP OF BLOOD





PUT UP THE MOURNING FLAG AND GO SPREAD A RUMOUR THAT I'VE PASSED AWAY. ONCE THE ENEMIES CATCH WIND OF IT, THEY'LL SURELY COME FOR A SURPRISE NIGHT RAID.

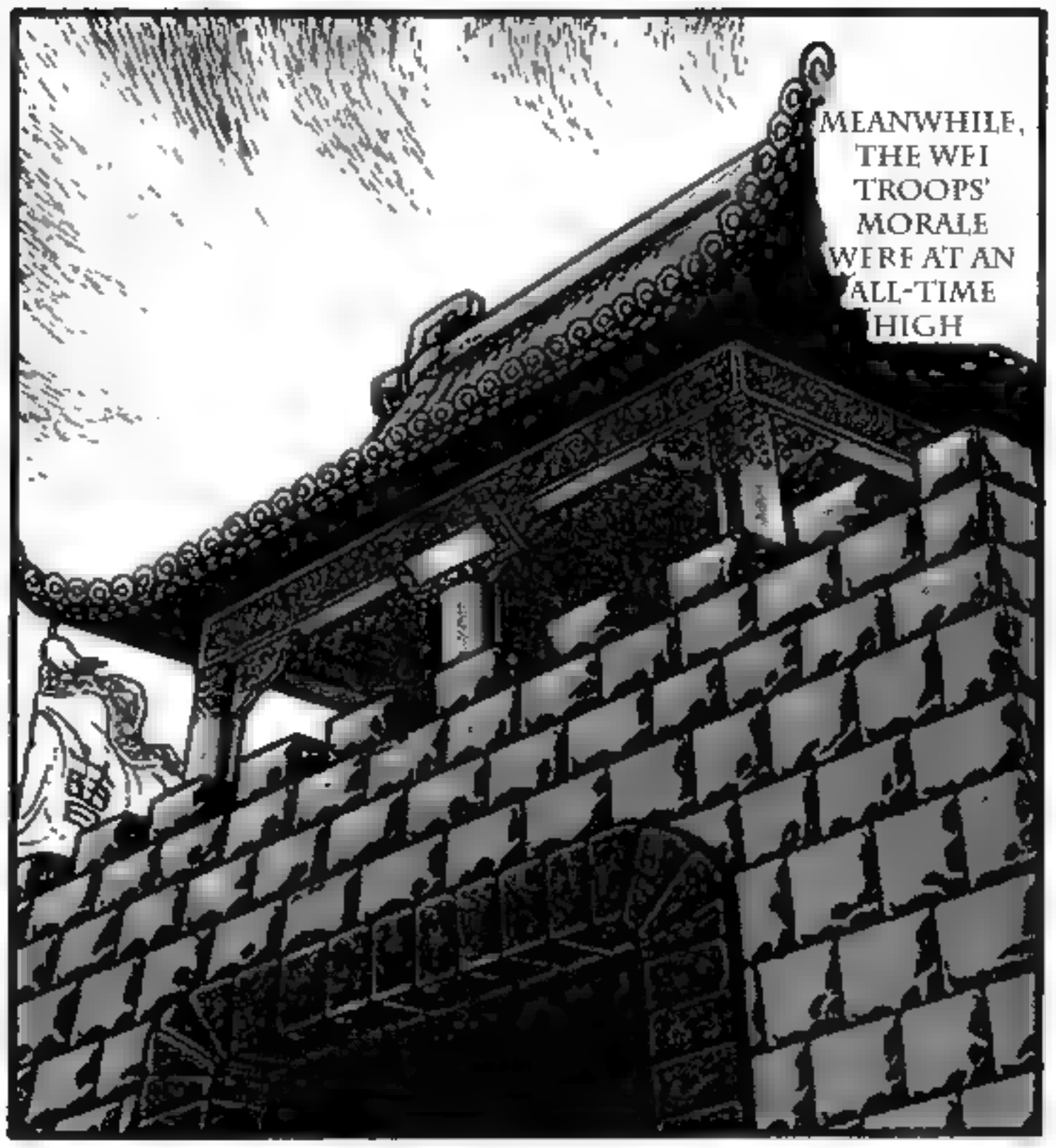
I PURPOSELY FELL TO TRICK THE ENEMIES INTO BELIEVING THAT I'M GRAVELY ILL.

THEY MAY LAUGH AT ME OUT ON THE BATTLEFIELD BUT IT IS I WHO WILL HAVE THE LAST LAUGH...!

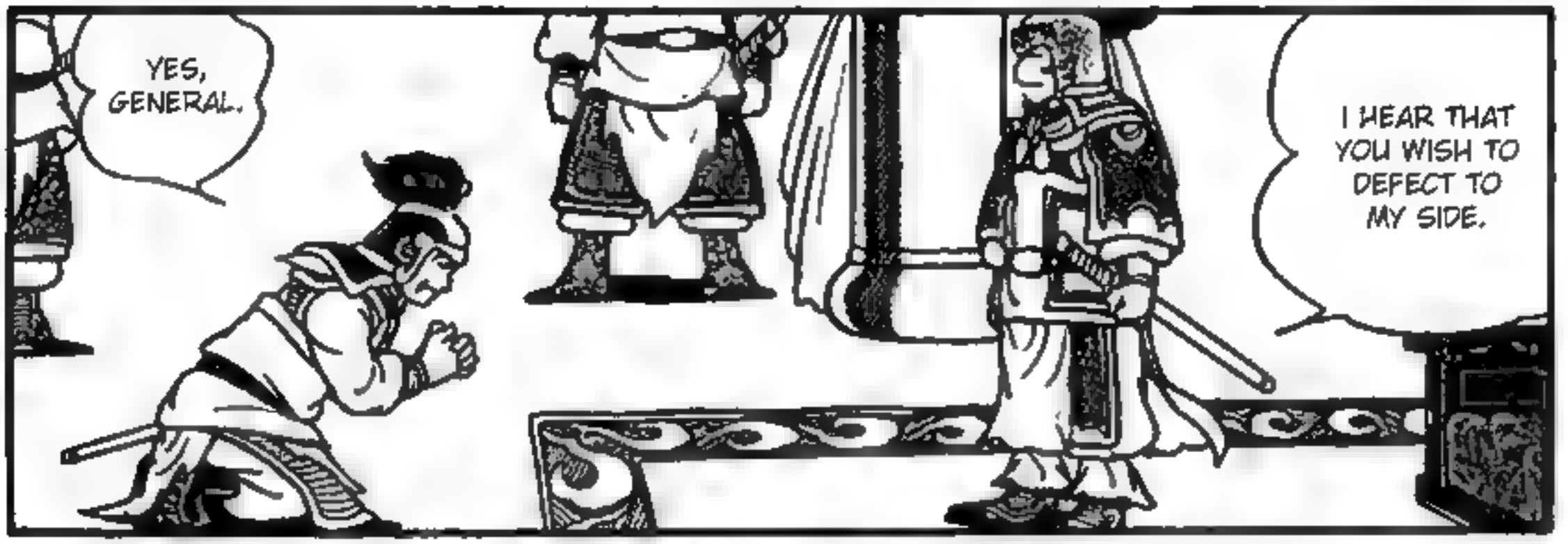
AND SO THE MOURNING FLAGS WERE PUT UP.

AND THE SOLDIERS BEGAN TO WHISPER NEWS OF ZHOU YU S DEATH.

A COMPANY OF WU SOLDIERS WISH TO SURRENDER?


MEANWHILE, THE WEI TROOPS' MORALE WERE AT AN ALL-TIME HIGH

ALRIGHT, LET HIM THROUGH.


YES, GENERAL.
I HEAR THAT YOU WISH TO DEFECT TO MY SIDE.

COMMANDER ZHOU YU HAS RECENTLY PASSED AWAY AND IT'S BEEN DECIDED THAT OUR ARMY WILL RETREAT BACK TO WU.

WHY IS THAT?

HMM, I SEE...

FOR US SOLDIERS WITH NO REAL RANK, WE CAN ONLY ESCAPE POVERTY BY ACCOMPLISHING SOME DEED OUT ON THE BATTLEFIELD. ONLY A DOG'S LIFE AWAITS ME IF I RETREAT BACK HOME. BY CHANGING SIDES, I CAN AT LEAST GET ANOTHER CHANCE TO EARN SOME REWARD.

MORALE IS AT AN ALL-TIME LOW WITH OUR RECENT BACK-TO-BACK DEFEATS AND THE DEATH OF OUR COMMANDER. MOST HAVE LOST ALL WILL TO FIGHT.

SO WHAT'S THE CURRENT STATUS OF YOUR ENCAMPMENTS?

IT SEEMS THE TIME TO WIPE THE ENEMIES OUT HAS COME AT LAST.

YES.

THANK YOU, GENERAL.

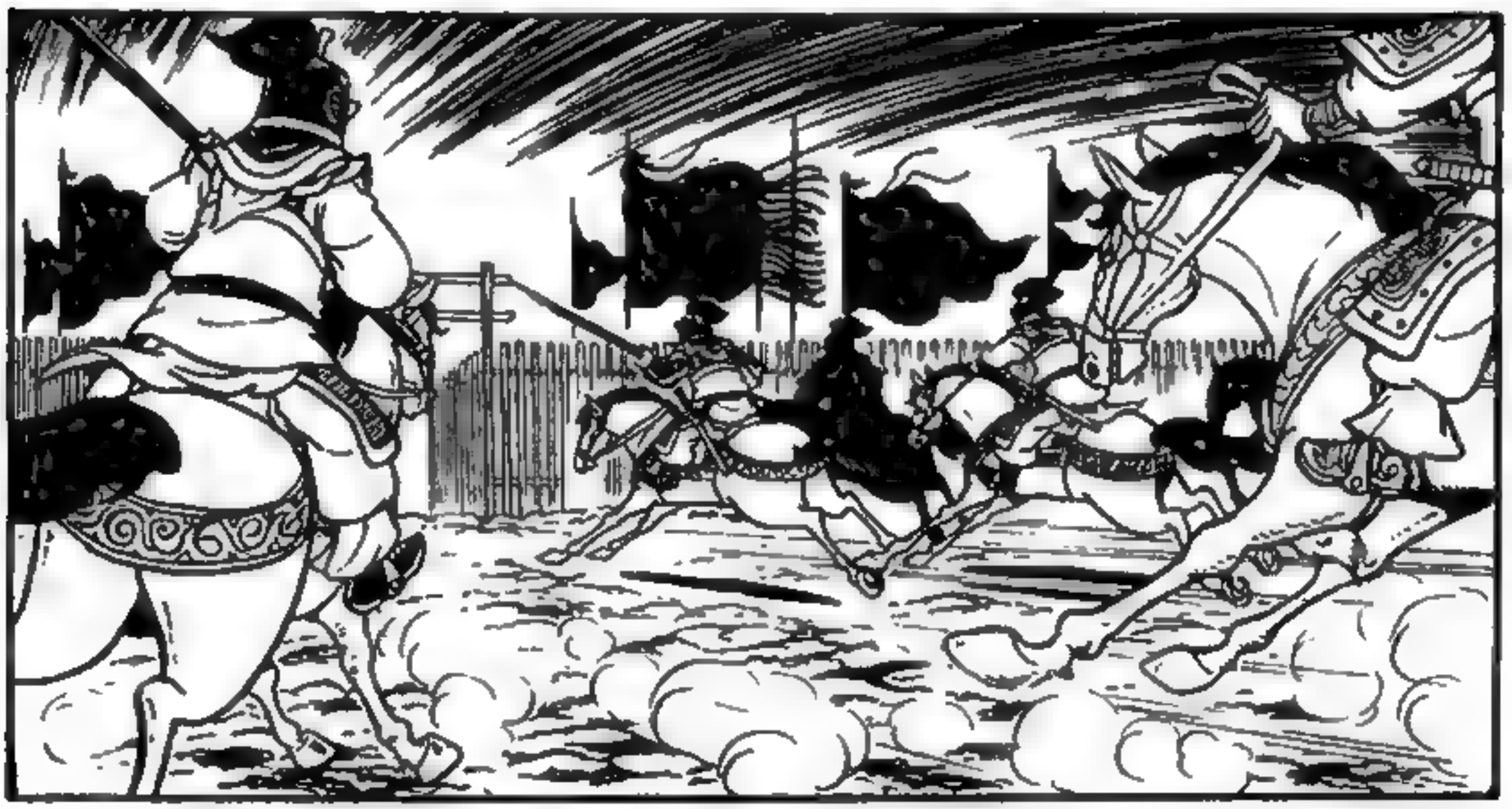
FINE, YOU AND YOUR FELLOW SOLDIERS CAN FIGHT ALONG-SIDE US.

SPLENDID.

WE'LL CONDUCT A SURPRISE ATTACK TONIGHT.

TIME TO DELIVER THE FINISHING BLOW, MEN.

CHARGE!



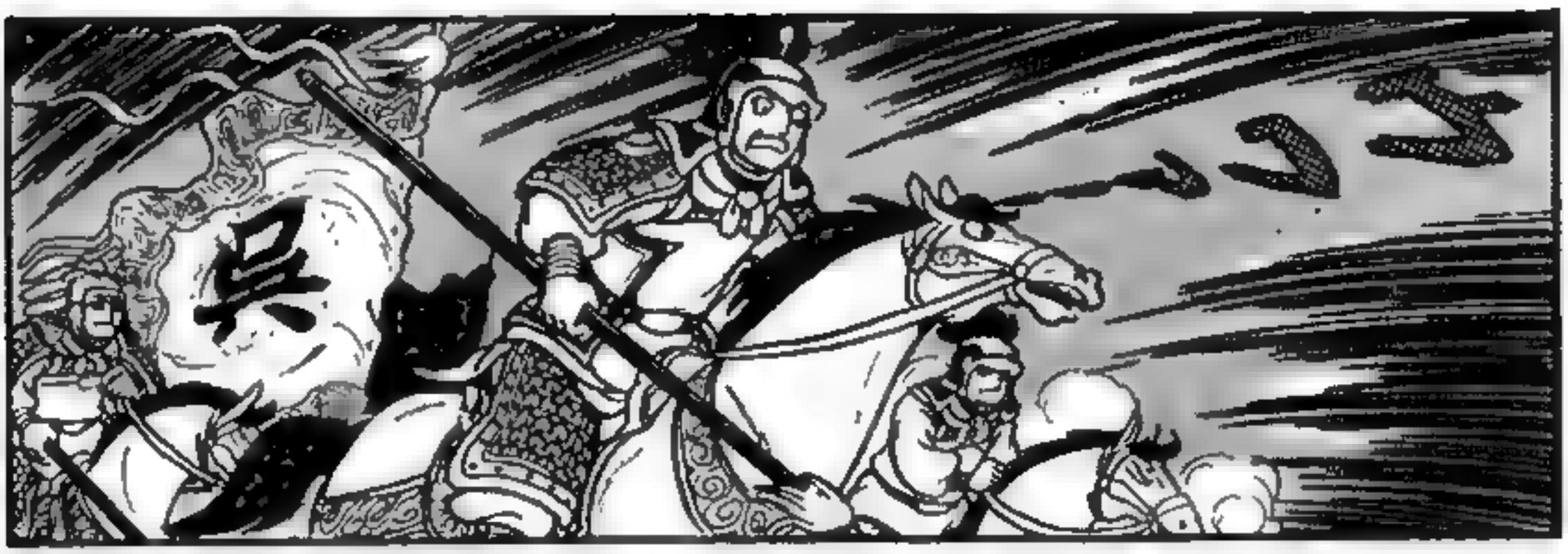
HM?

COULD THEY HAVE SECRETLY RETREATED ALREADY?

NOT A SINGLE PERSON AROUND...
THERE ARE ONLY EMPTY TENTS HERE.

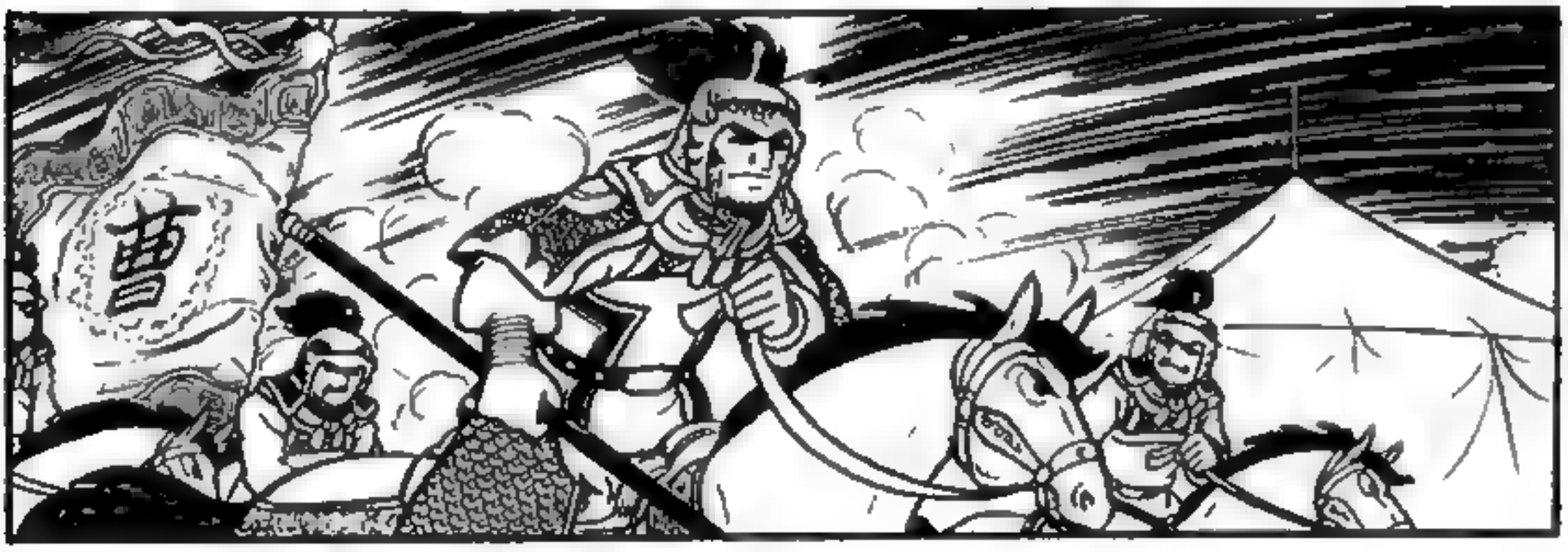
!?

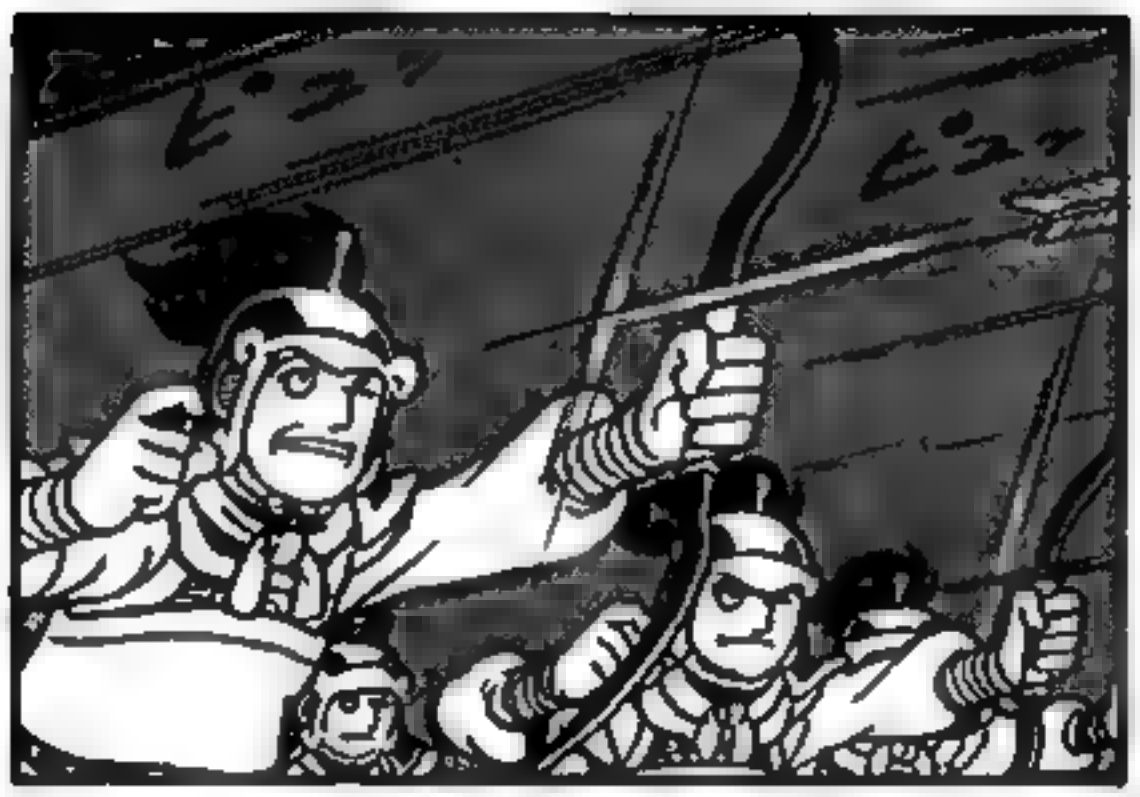
HM?

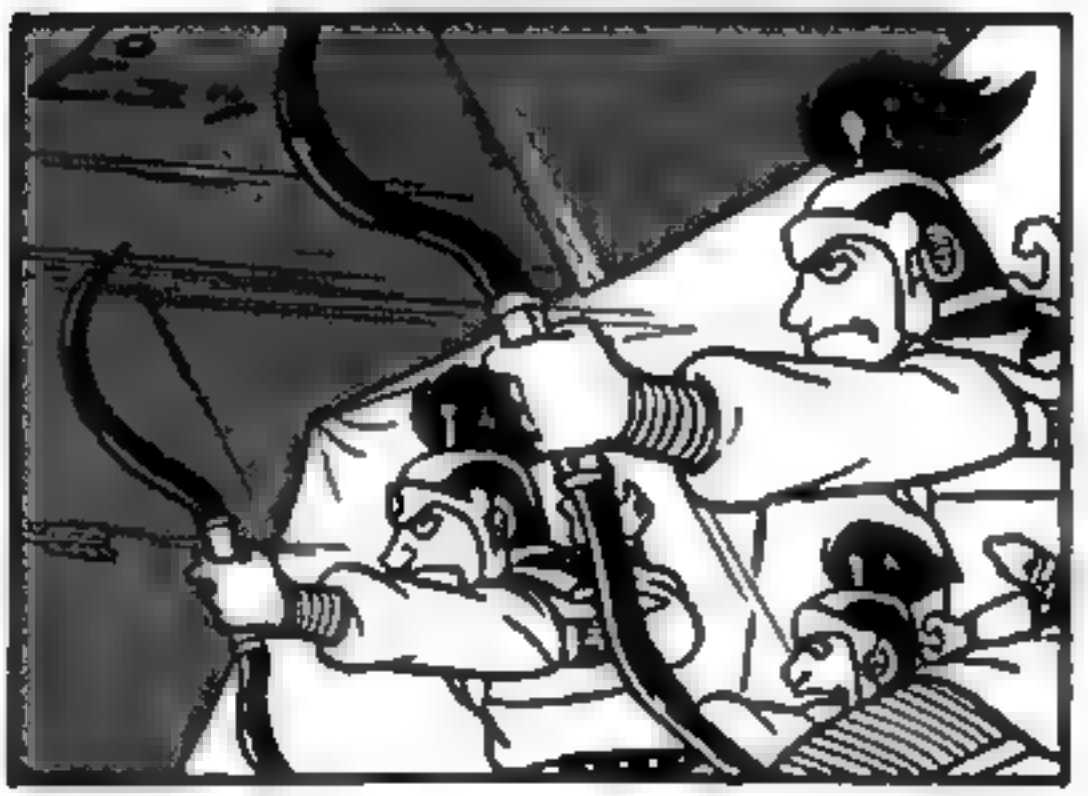


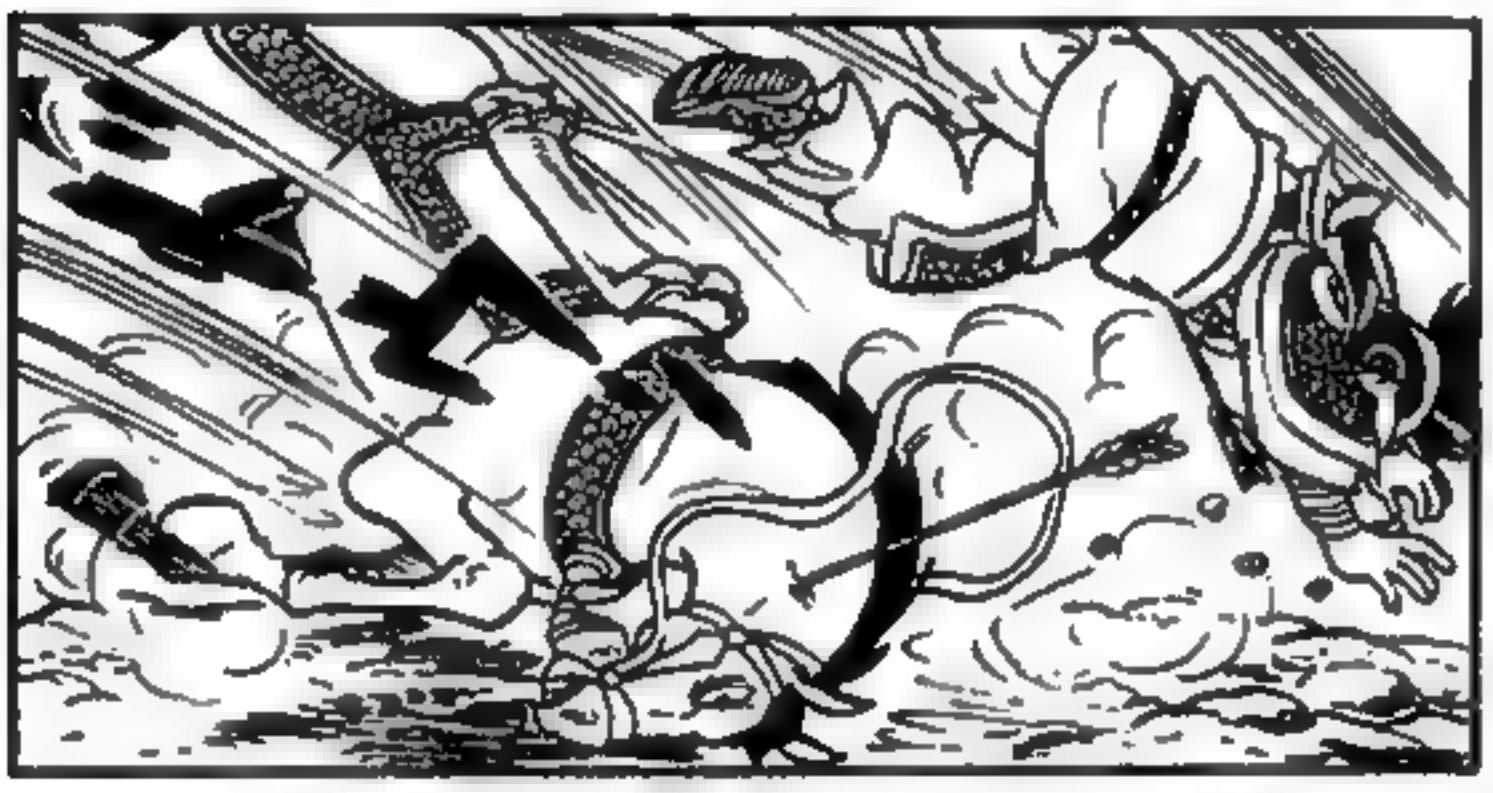
RETREAT!

IT'S A TRAP! WE'RE SUR-ROUNDED!

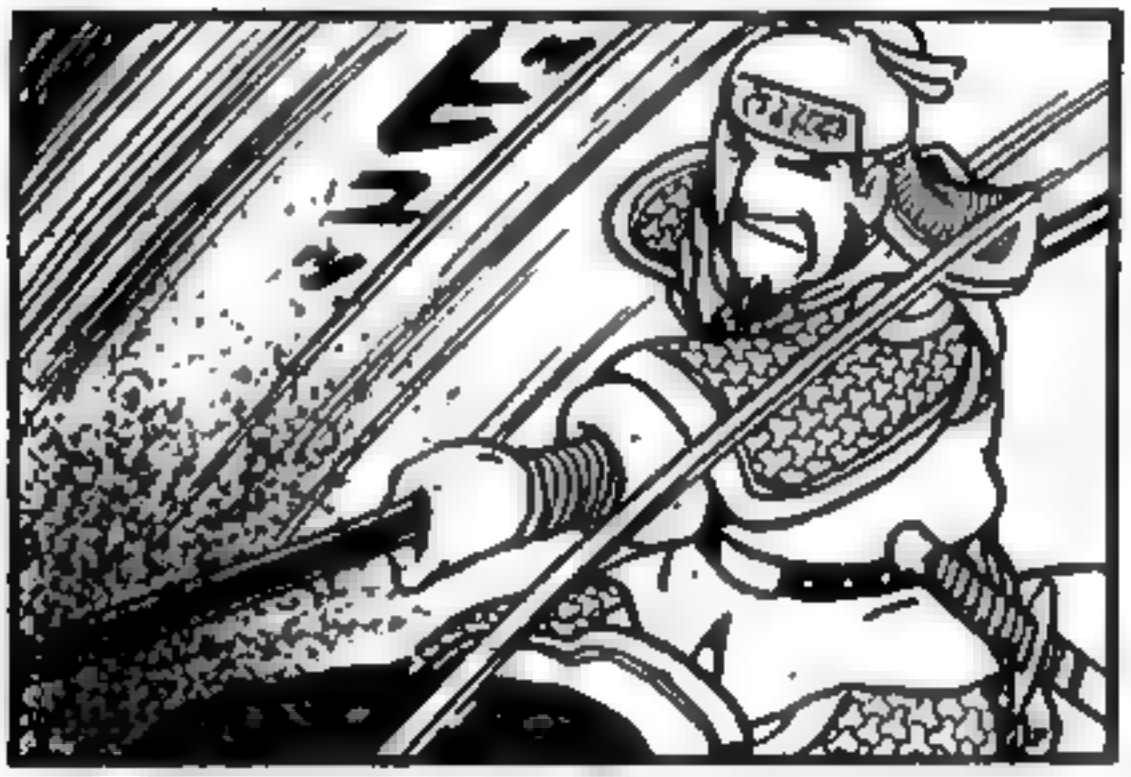


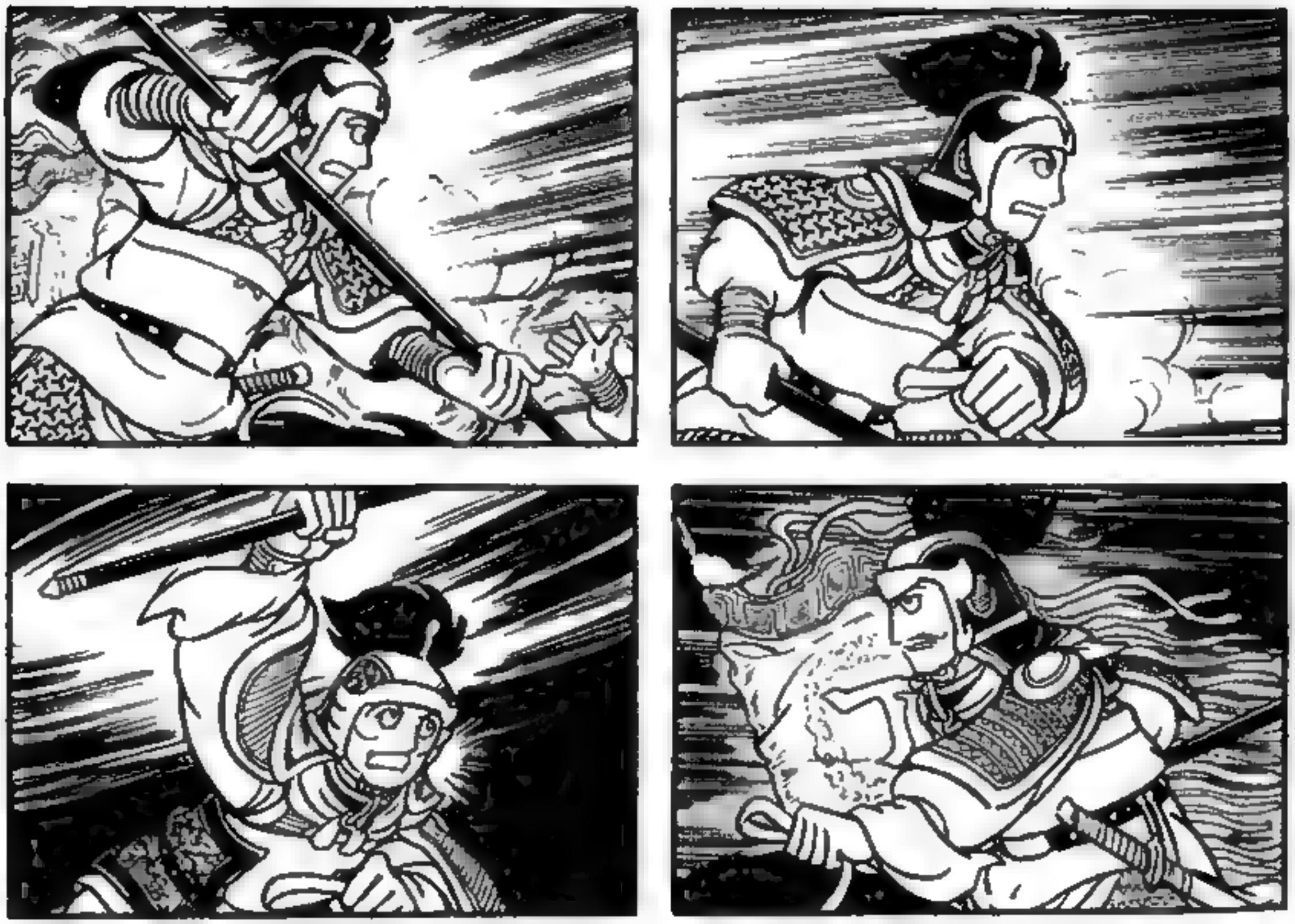






AGH!

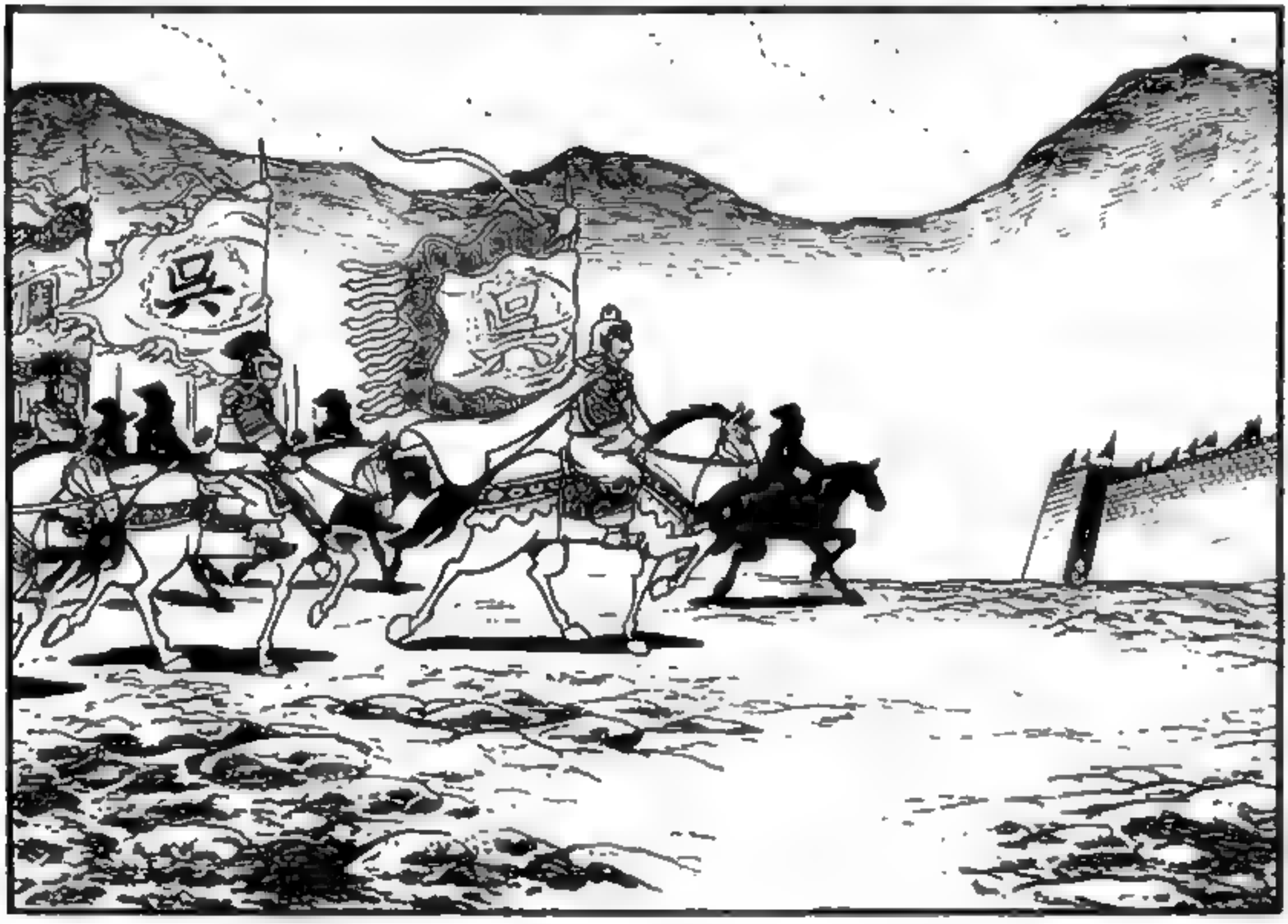




WELL DONE.
WE'VE SUCCESS-FULLY MANAGED TO DESTROY MOST OF THE ENEMY FORCES, SIR.

NOW THEN, LET US MARCH INSIDE NANJUN!

I SEE.
CAO REN AND HIS SURVIVING TROOPS HAVE ABANDONED NANJUN AND FLED TOWARDS XIANGYANG.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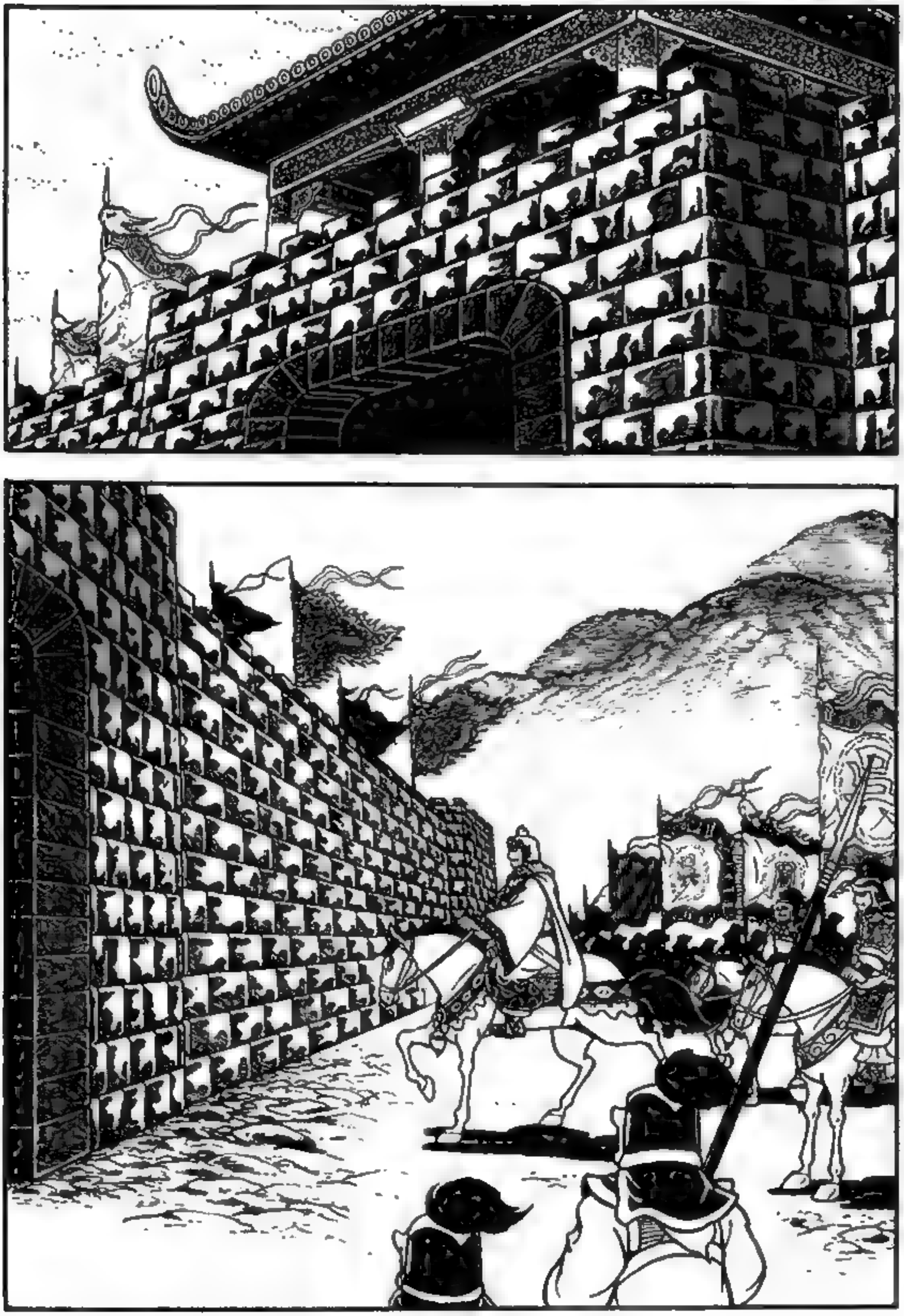


HM?

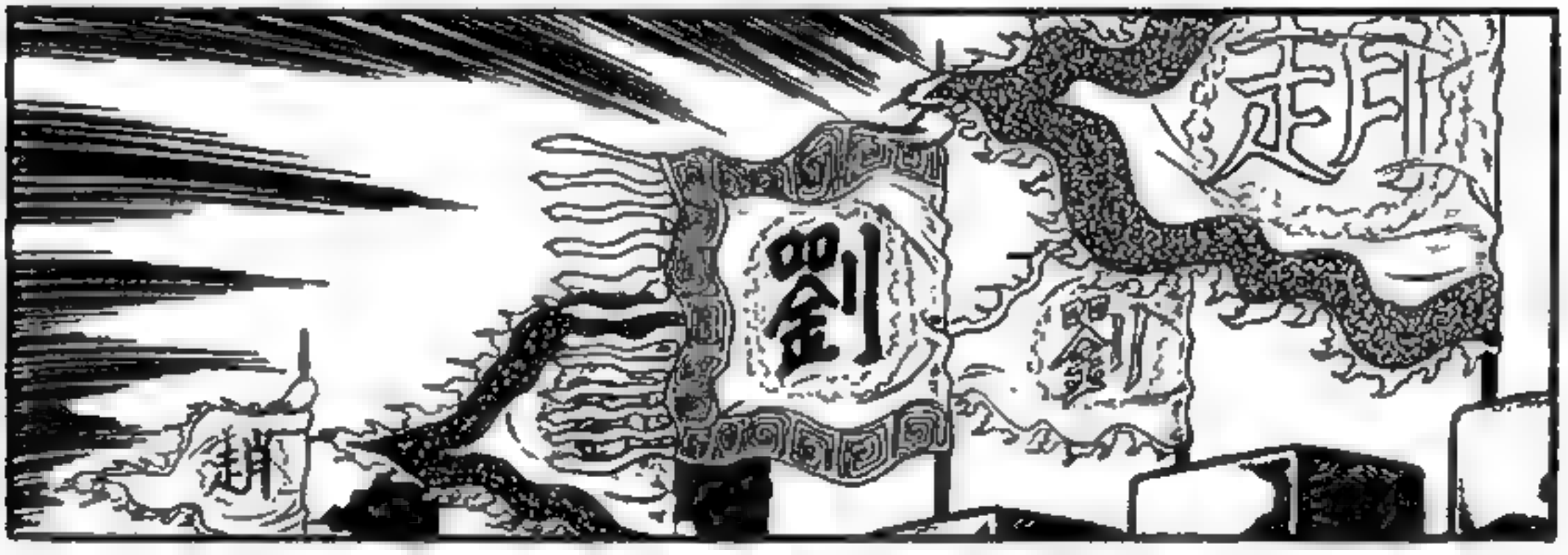
IT IS I, ZHAO YUN ZILONG. I HAVE CAPTURED NANJUN AS PER KONGMING'S ORDERS.

WHO STANDS BEFORE ME?

IF YOU FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE, TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT THE FLAGS.

WHAT!?

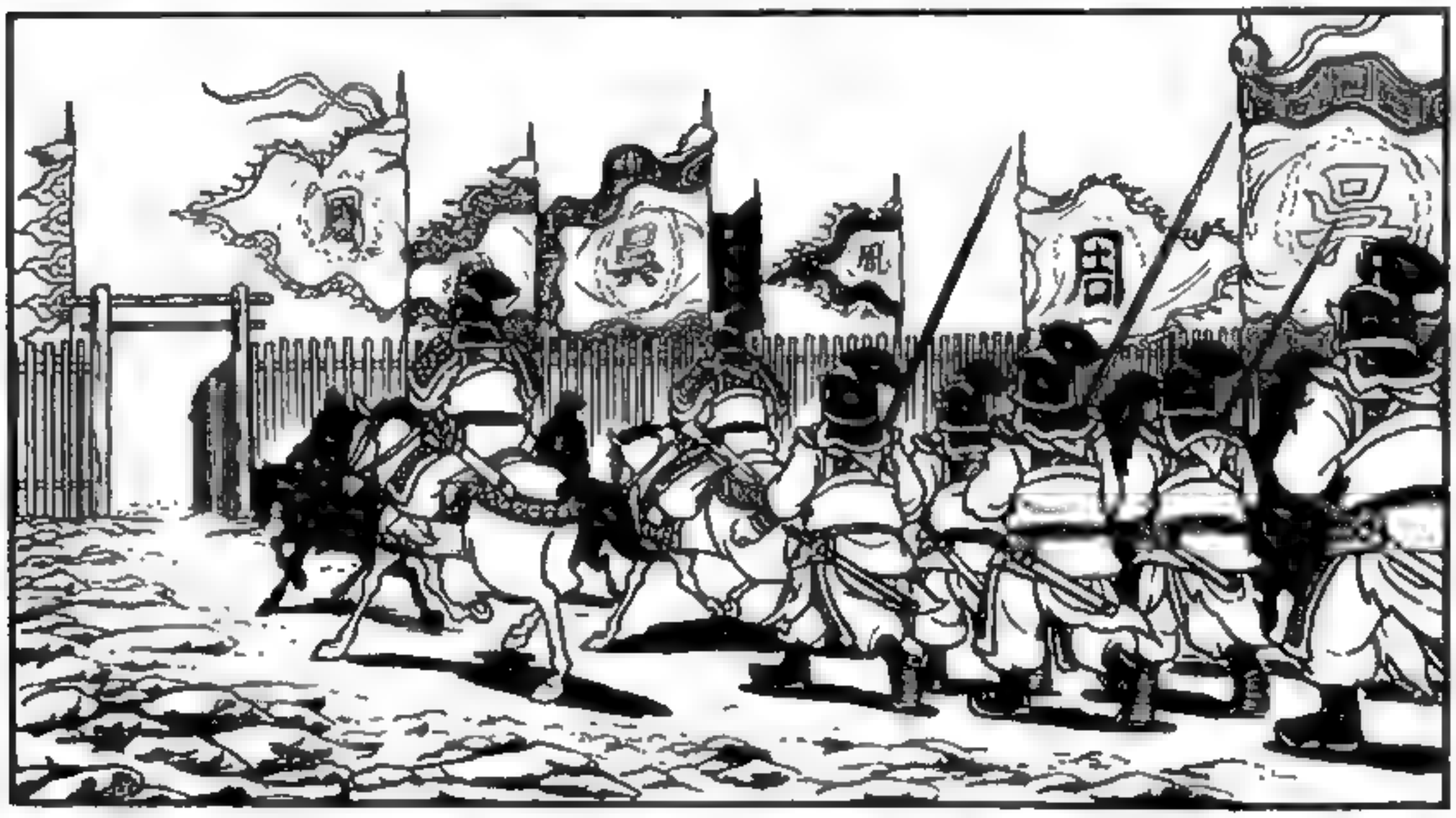
*FLAGS READ LIU(劉) AND ZHAO(趙) FOR LIU BEI AND ZHAO YUN



IN ANY CASE, I'M AFRAID I'LL HAVE TO ASK YOU TO LEAVE FOR TODAY AS I'M NOT TAKING IN ANY GUESTS.
SEEING AS HOW YOU WERE HAVING MUCH DIFFICULTY, KONGMING DECIDED IT WAS TIME FOR US TO GIVE IT A SHOT.

MARCH BACK TO BASE!

NGH...



THOSE SHAMELESS BASTARDS...! FOR THE TIME BEING, WE WILL FIRST TAKE XIANGYANG AND THE CAPITAL OF JINGZHOU. ONCE THAT'S DONE, WE'LL THEN TAKE NANJUN BACK BY FORCE!

YES, SIR!

YES, SIR!

GAN NING, LING TONG!

YES, SIR!

GAN NING, I ORDER YOU TO TAKE JINGZHOU AT ONCE!

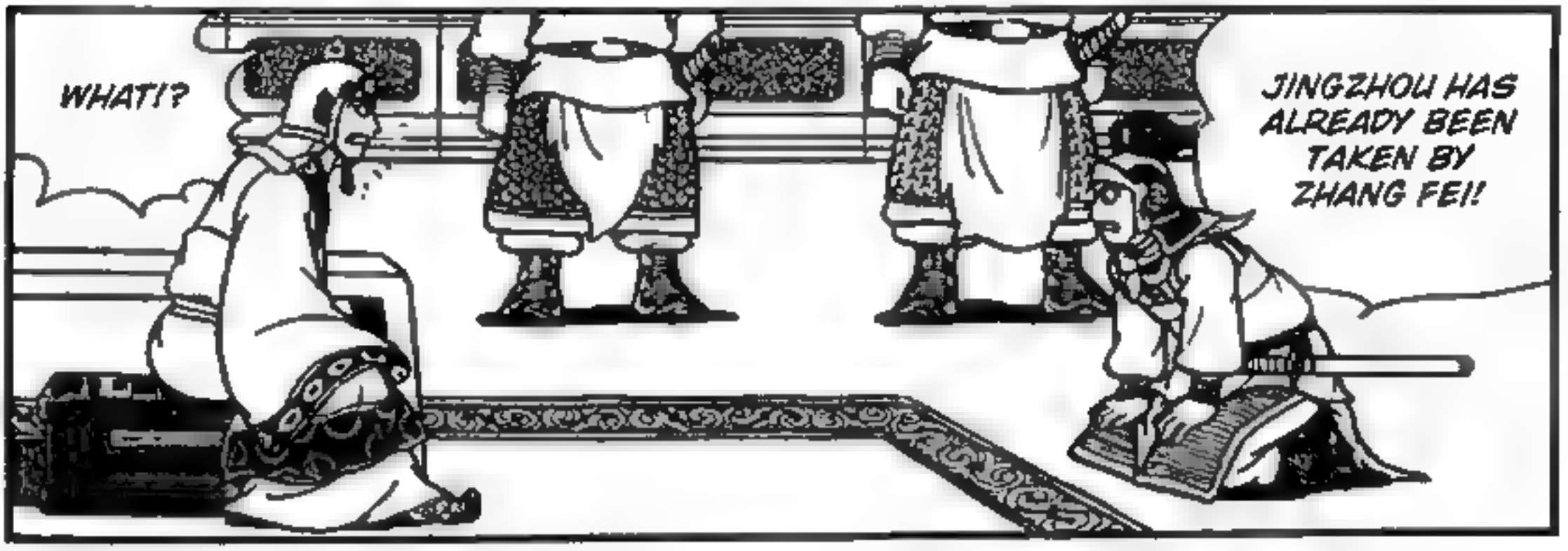
AT ONCE.

AS FOR YOU, LING TONG, LEAD THE ATTACK ON XIANG-YANG RIGHT AWAY.

DON'T THINK YOU'LL GET AWAY WITH THIS, KONGMING... I'LL TAKE BACK NANJUN NO MATTER WHAT!

URGENT REPORT!

COM-
MANDER
ZHOU!


WHAT!?
JINGZHOU HAS ALREADY BEEN TAKEN BY ZHANG FEI!

YES, SIR. LIU BEI AND ZHANG FEI'S FLAGS WERE ALREADY HANGING FROM JINGZHOU'S WALLS.

I-IS THAT THE TRUTH!?

URGENT REPORT!

HOW COULD THIS...

COM-MANDER ZHOU!

THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! HOW COULD JINGZHOU AND XIANGYANG HAVE BOTH FALLEN SO EASILY WHEN NANJUN ALONE CAUSED US SO MUCH TROUBLE!?

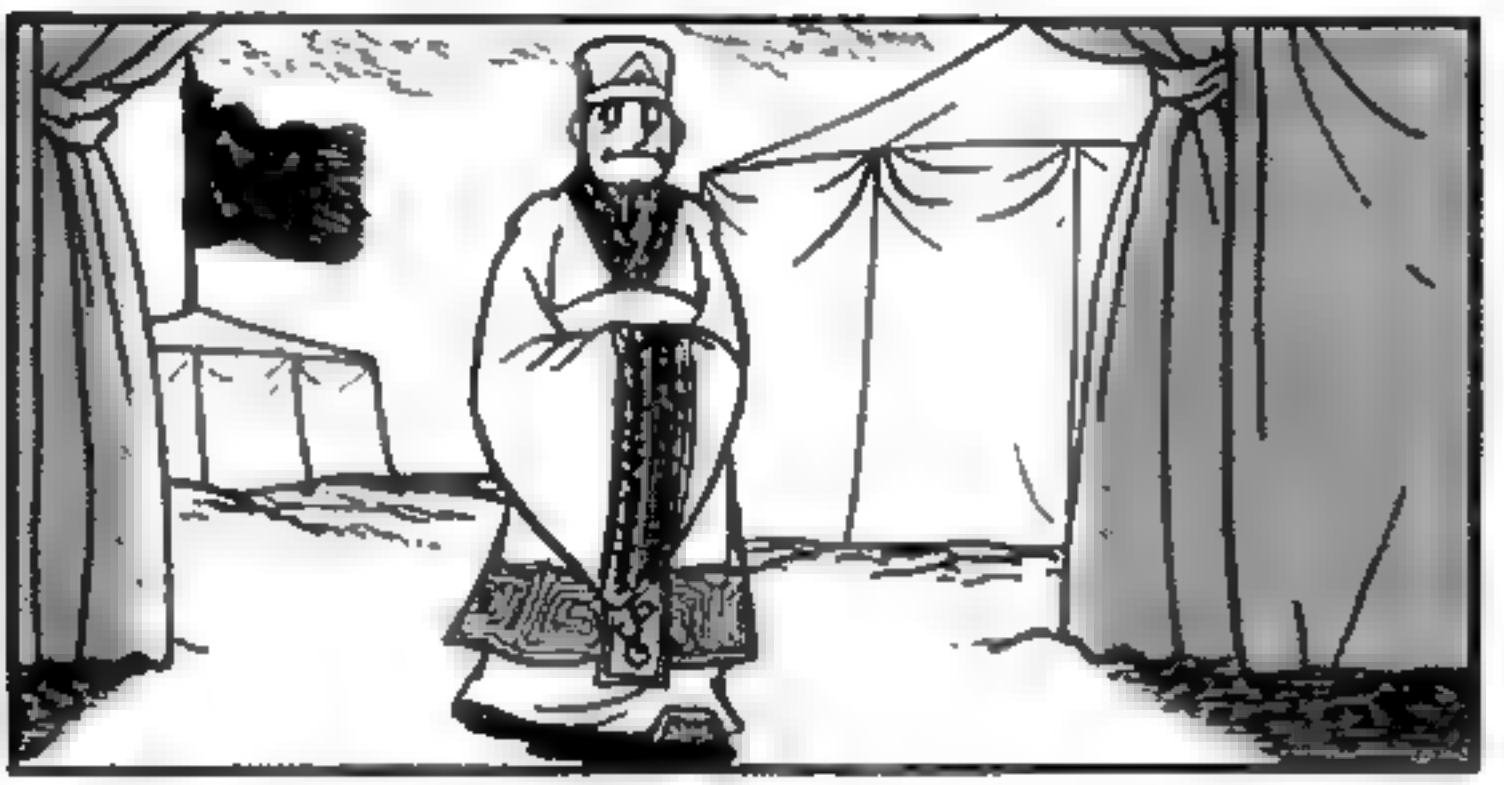
WHAT!?

XIANGYANG HAS ALREADY BEEN TAKEN BY GUAN YU!

YES, PLEASE DO SO, LU SU.

I'LL GO FIND OUT RIGHT AWAY, COMMANDER.

CURSE THIS TURN OF EVENTS!



YES, GO ON.
I'VE FOUND OUT HOW JINGZHOU AND XIANGYANG WERE CAPTURED SO EASILY, COMMANDER.

KONGMING MANAGED TO OBTAIN CAO REN'S SEAL AND USED IT TO SEND A LETTER ASKING JINGZHOU'S FORCES TO COME RELIEVE THE WEI TROOPS AT NANJUN AT ONCE. WITH ONLY A SMALL GARRISON LEFT BEHIND, ZHANG FEI WAS EASILY ABLE TO CAPTURE JINGZHOU.

YES, SIR...

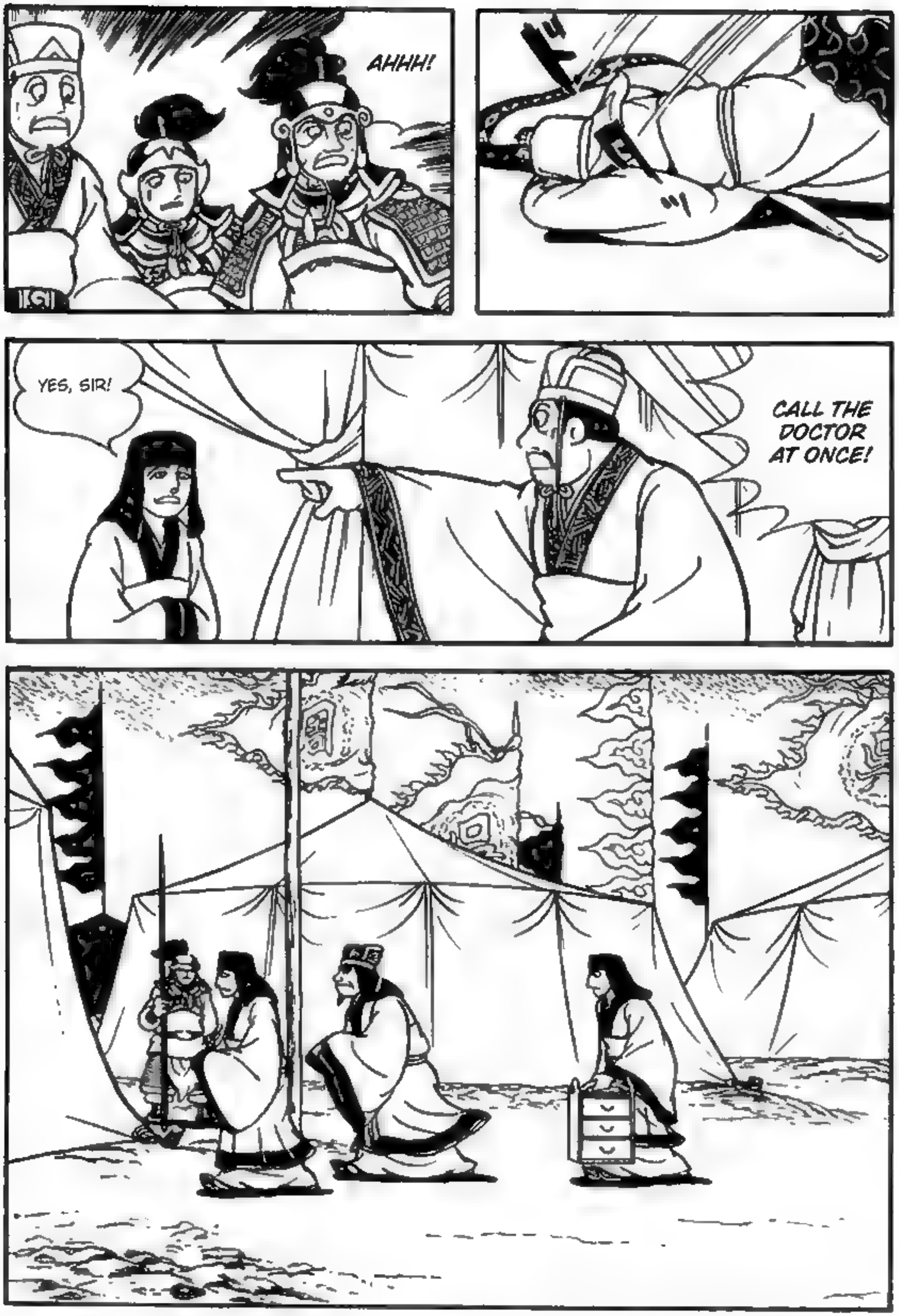
WAS XIANG-YANG TAKEN THE SAME WAY?

CAO REN'S SEAL WAS KEPT BY HIS SECRETARY CHEN JIAO. UNFORTUNATELY, HE WAS TAKEN CAPTIVE WITH THE FALL OF NANJUN, ALLOWING KONGMING TO USE THE SEAL FOR HIS OWN PLANS.

BUT HOW DID KONGMING OBTAIN CAO REN'S SEAL!?

URGHH!

NGHH!


AHHH!
YES, SIR!
CALL THE DOCTOR AT ONCE!

BUT I WILL NOT TAKE THE RECENT TURN OF EVENTS LYING DOWN. I'LL TAKE BACK ALL OF OUR RIGHTFUL POSSESSIONS BY WAGING WAR AGAINST LIU BEI IF NECESSARY.

FINE, FINE.

YOU MUST TAKE CARE NOT TO STRESS YOURSELF OUT, COMMANDER ZHOU.

WHY?

I WOULD ADVISE AGAINST THAT, SIR.

IT WAS THE LIVES OF OUR MEN THAT BOUGHT VICTORY AT RED CLIFFS! SO WHY SHOULD JINGZHOU'S LANDS ALL GO TO THOSE COUNTRY BUMPKINS LIU BEI AND KONGMING WHO HAVEN'T EVEN LIFTED A SINGLE FINGER!?

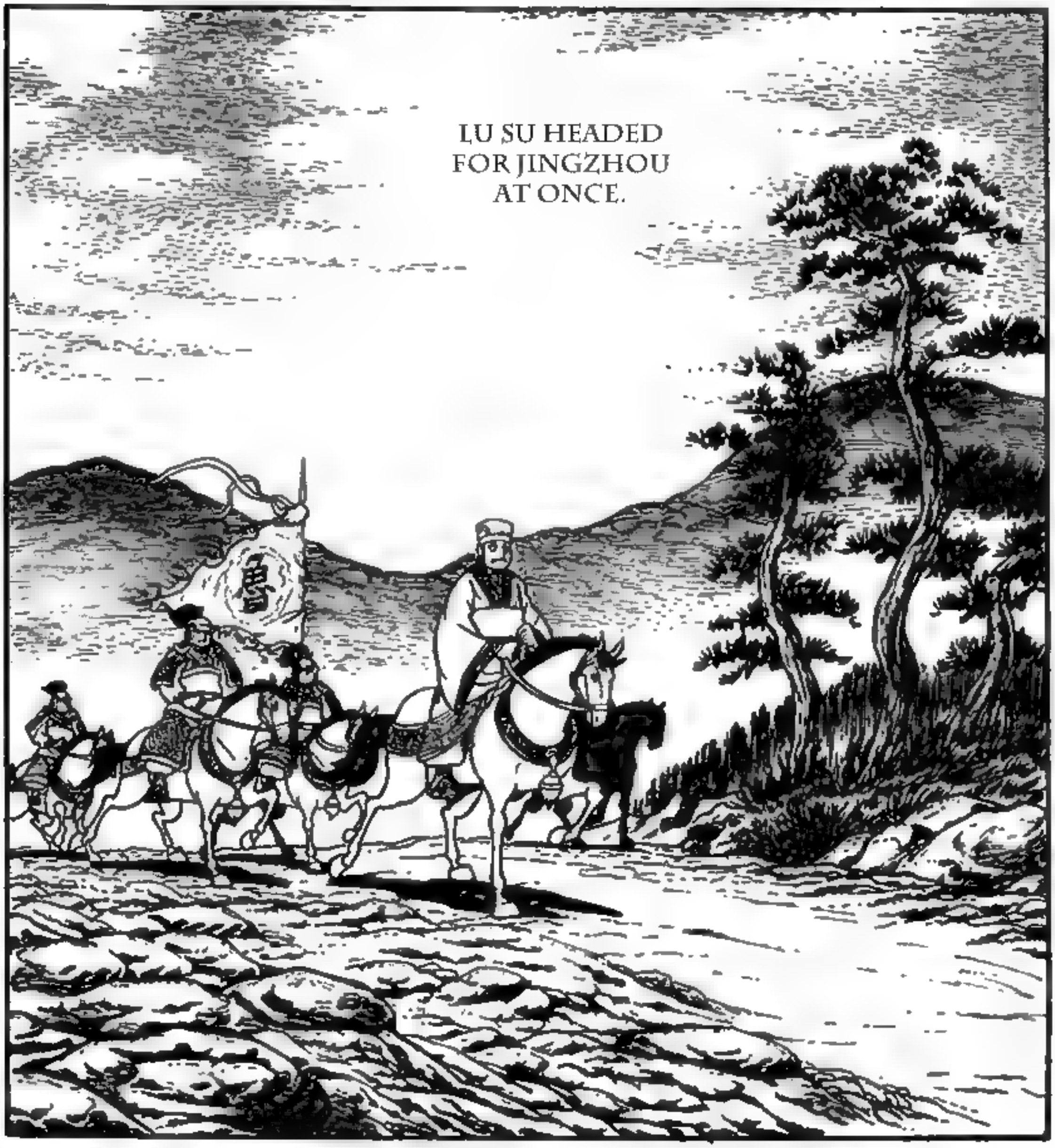
CAO CAO MAY HAVE LOST AT RED CLIFFS BUT HE IS STILL ALIVE. NOT ONLY THAT, THE WEI TROOPS LEFT BEHIND AT THE SOUTHERN FRONT CONTINUE TO GIVE US MUCH TROUBLE. OUR LORD HASN'T HAD MUCH SUCCESS CONQUERING HEFEI EITHER. TO FIGHT WITH LIU BEI IN THIS SITUATION IS TO GIVE CAO CAO A CHANCE TO RECOUP HIS LOSSES.

I UNDERSTAND SIR'S RAGE BUT FIGHTING AGAINST LIU BEI PRESENTLY WOULD ONLY PUT US AT A DISADVANTAGE.

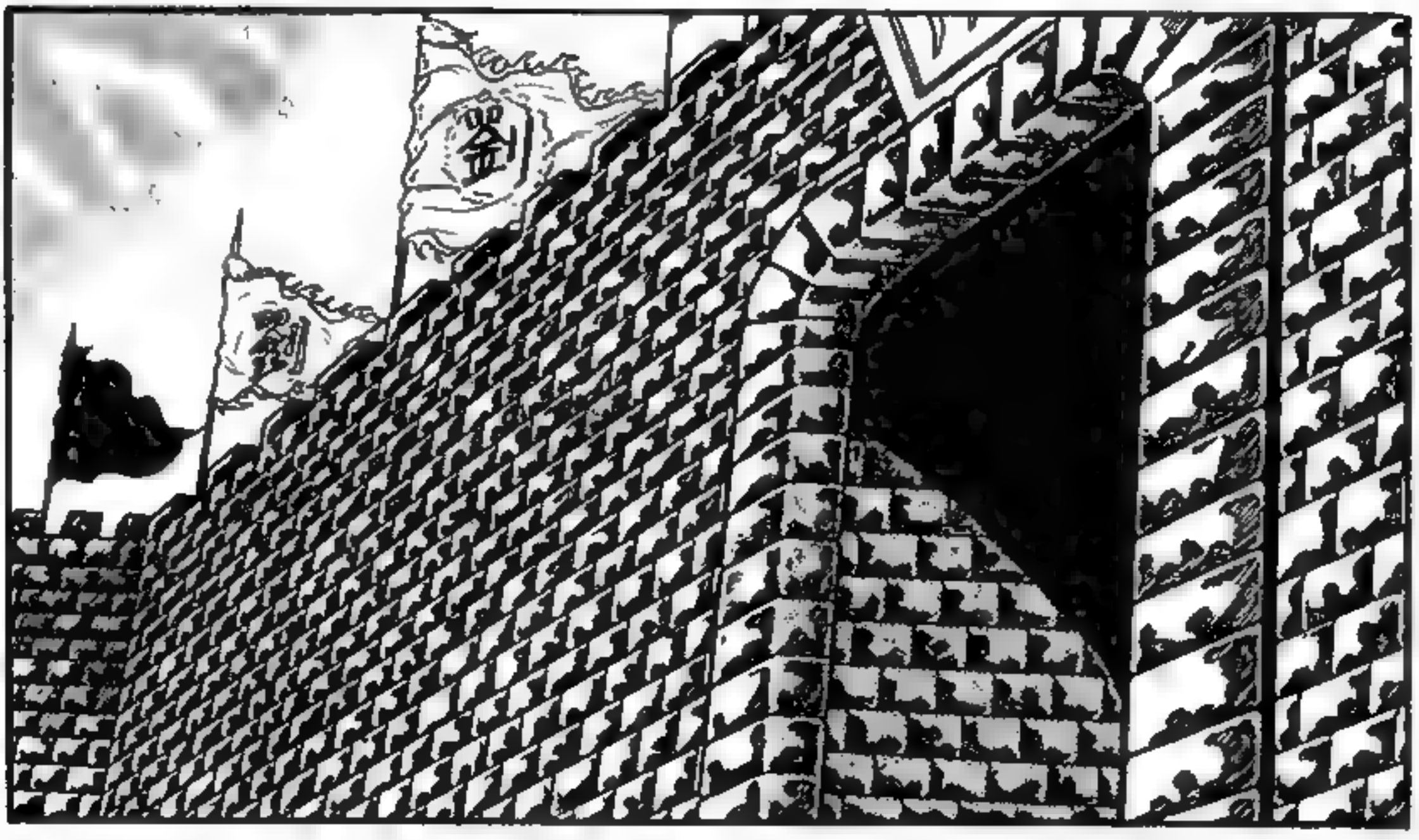
ALLOW ME TO AT LEAST GO REASON THINGS OUT WITH LIU BEI.

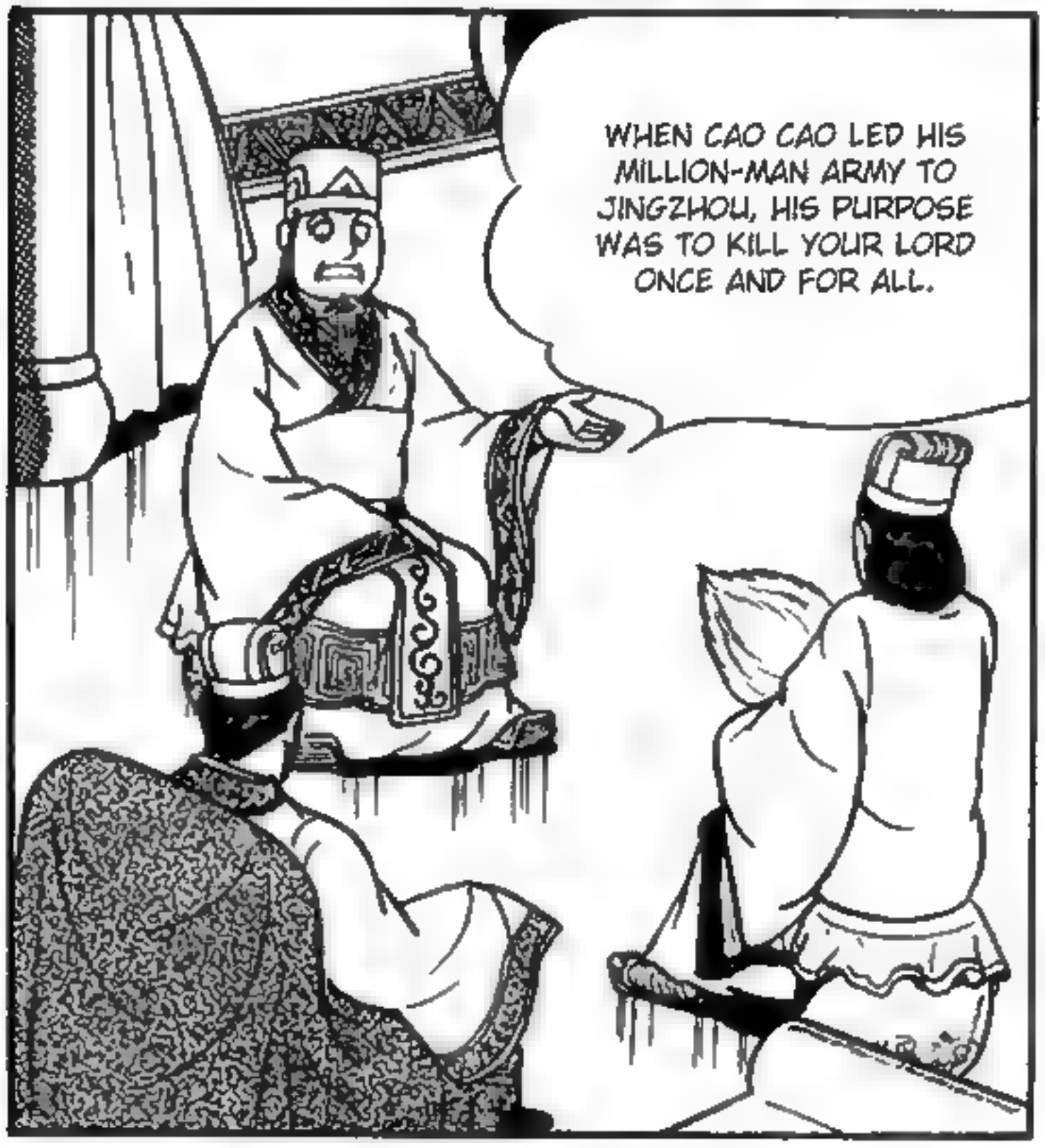
BUT EVEN SO...

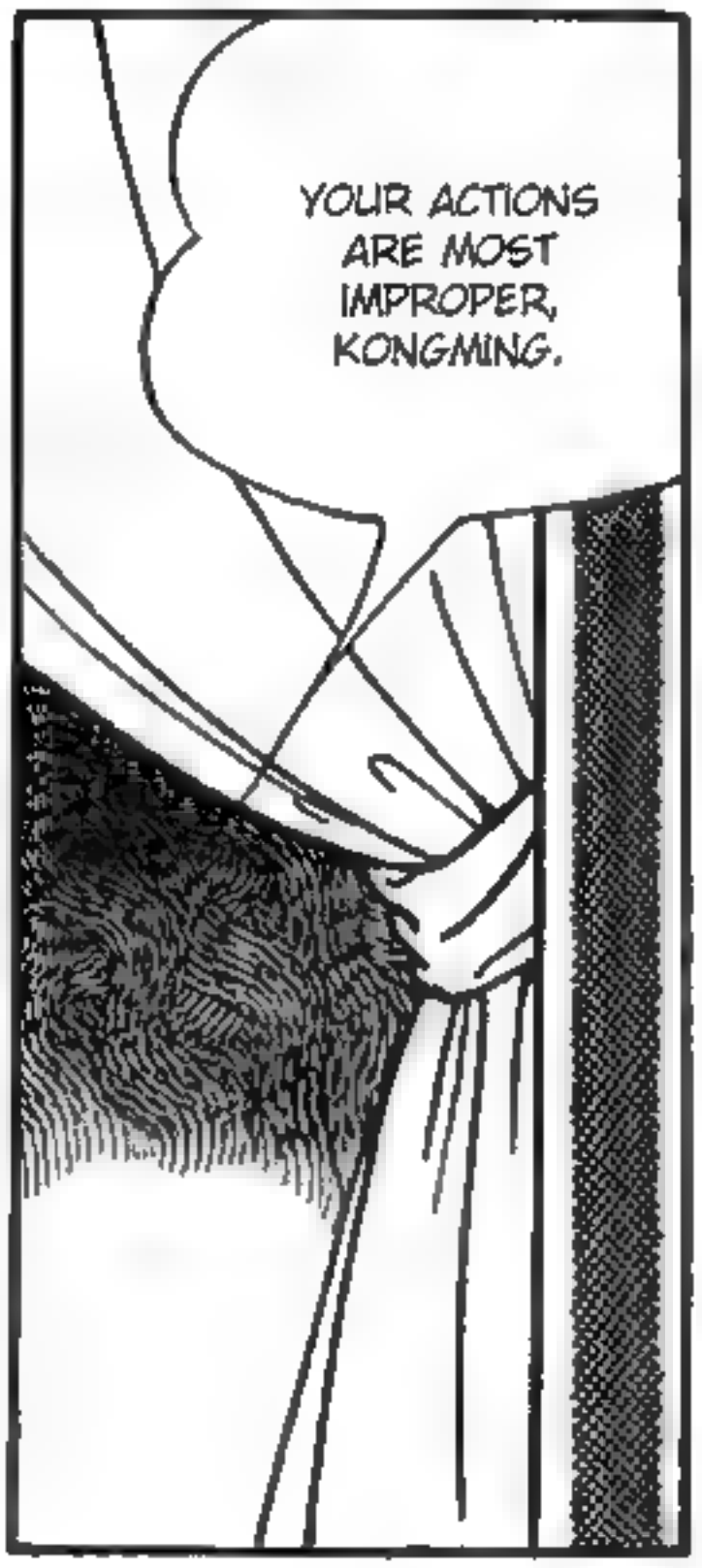
THANK YOU, SIR.
FINE, WE SHALL TRY DIPLOMACY BEFORE RESORTING TO MILITARY FORCE.


LU SU HEADED FOR JINGZHOU AT ONCE.

JINGZHOU'S MASTER







OH, NOT AT ALL. JINGZHOU'S COMMAND-ERIES ARE NO ONE'S BUT JINGZHOU ITSELF, AND THUS SHOULD BELONG NEITHER TO CAO CAO NOR WU.

AS SUCH, IT IS ONLY PROPER THAT ALL 9 COMMANDERIES OF JINGZHOU BELONG TO WU.

AND IN SUCH DIRE TIMES, OUR LORD WAS KIND ENOUGH TO LEND HIS ASSISTANCE. IT'S AN UNDENIABLE FACT THAT WU MADE MANY PERSONAL SACRIFICES TO DRIVE CAO CAO BACK NORTH.

NOT ONLY THAT, LIU QI AND MY LORD BOTH DESCEND FROM THE SAME IMPERIAL LIU FAMILY. SO I ASK YOU, HOW IS IT IMPROPER FOR AN UNCLE TO ASSIST HIS COUSIN IN GOVERNANCE?

ALTHOUGH JINGZHOU'S LORD LIU BIAO MAY HAVE PASSED AWAY, HIS SON LIU QI IS STILL ALIVE, UNDER MY LORD'S CARE.

WHAT?

KONGMING HAD ALREADY LINED UP AN EXCUSE FOR THAT AS WELL...!

AGHH...

PLEASE CALL LIU QI HERE...

YES, SIR.

OH, SO YOU DOUBT MY WORDS...?

B-BUT IT IS YOU AND YOUR LORD WHO IS OCCUPYING JINGZHOU RIGHT NOW. FROM WHAT I HEAR, LIU QI IS AT JIANGXIA. I COULD HARDLY CALL THAT "ASSISTING IN GOVERNANCE."

.....

AH!

M-MY APOLO-GIES...

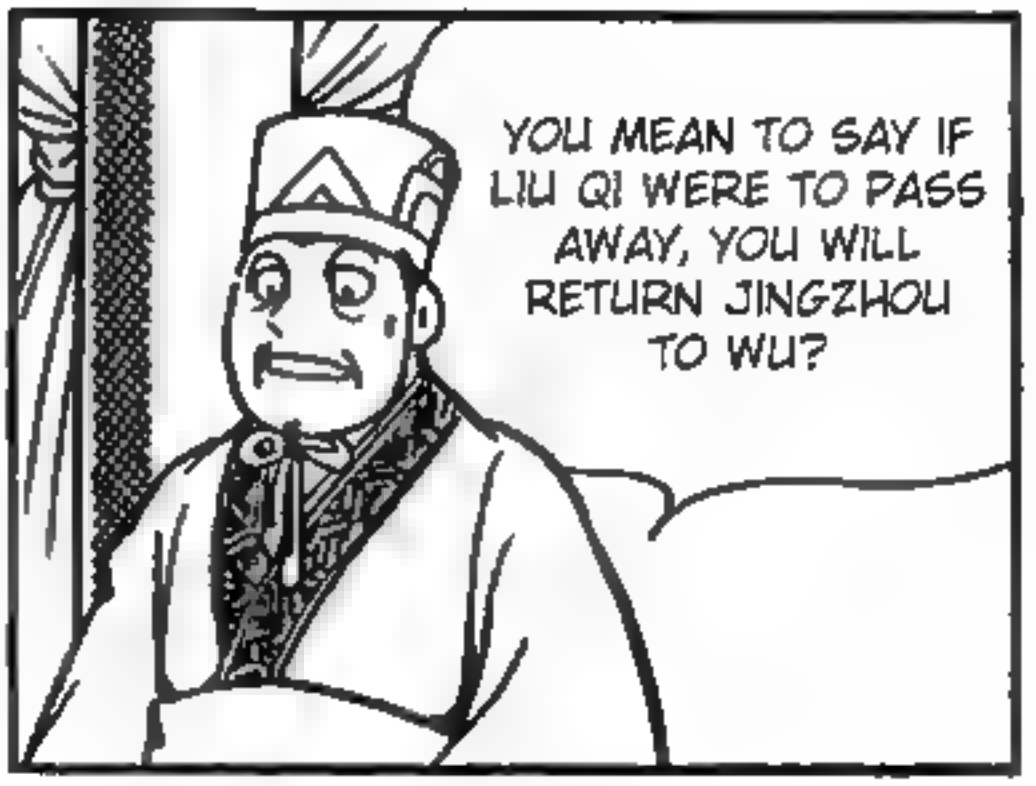
DOES THAT DISPEL YOUR DOUBTS, LU SU?

I'M AFRAID LIU QI IS NOT IN GOOD HEALTH AND MUST EXCUSE HIMSELF FOR NOW...

IF, AND ONLY IF, THAT WERE TO CHANGE, WOULD WU HAVE THE RIGHT TO CLAIM JINGZHOU'S LANDS.

AS YOU CAN SEE, AS LONG AS LIU QI IS ALIVE, THE RIGHTFUL MASTER OF JINGZHOU IS NO ONE ELSE BUT HE.

YES, I SUPPOSE NO ONE WOULD BE ABLE TO OBJECT TO THAT.


YOU MEAN TO SAY IF LIU QI WERE TO PASS AWAY, YOU WILL RETURN JINGZHOU TO WU?

UNDERSTOOD, I SHALL PASS ON YOUR WORDS TO ZHOU YU.

AND SO, LU SU RETURNED FRUITLESS.

I'M SURE IT WON'T BE LONG BEFORE HE PASSES AWAY.

YES, HE COULD NOT EVEN STAND ON HIS OWN.

AND IS LIU QI GRAVELY ILL?

HMM...

AS SUCH, I THINK IT TO BE WISE TO AVOID WAR AGAINST LIU BEI.

BUT THIS MAN BRINGS A MESSAGE FROM OUR LORD.

PARDON THE INTERRUP-TION,

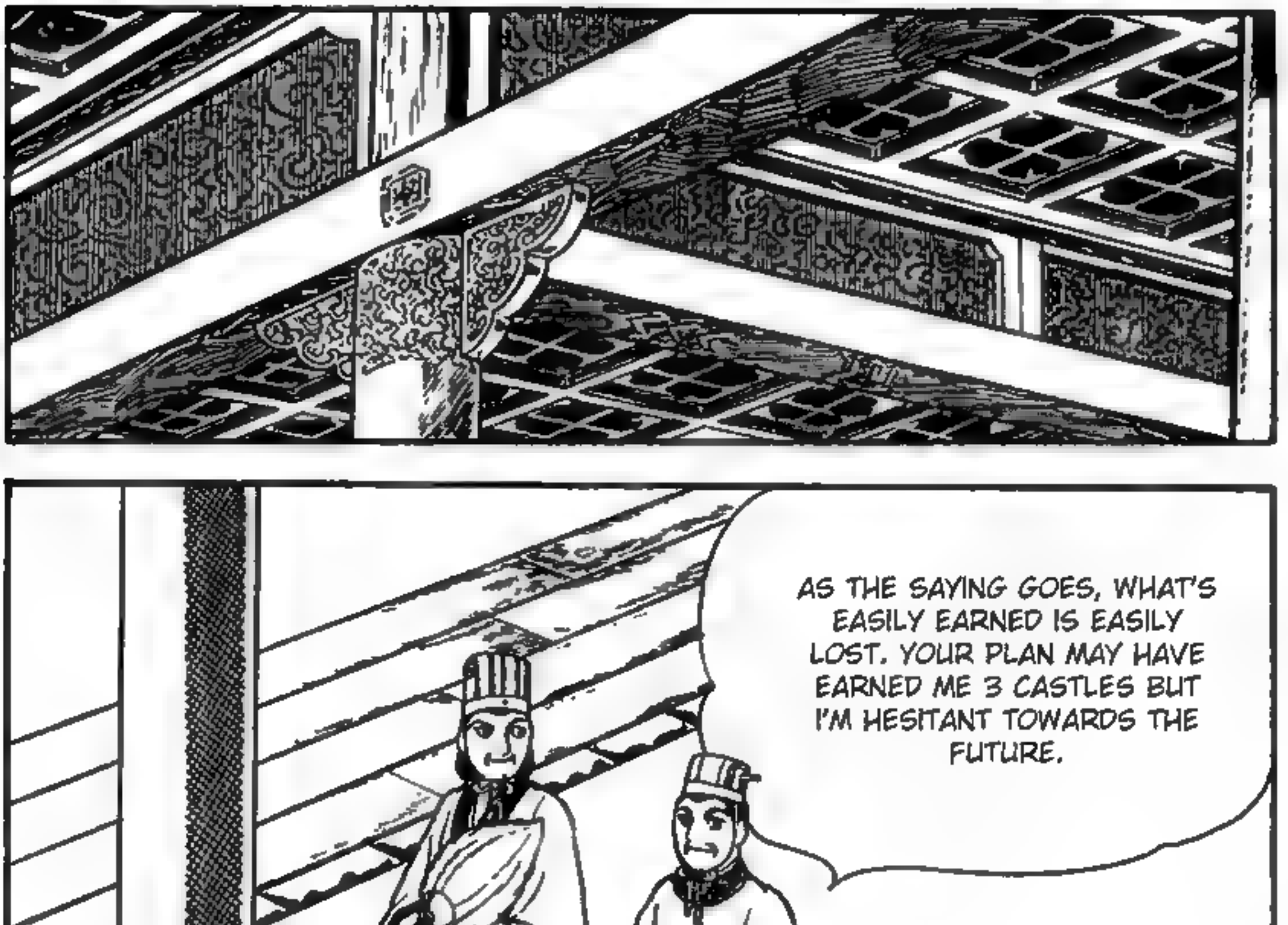
LORD SUN QUAN ORDERS YOU TO ASSIST HIS FORCES AT HEFEI.

SPEAK, THEN.

OUR LORD HAS SURROUNDED HEFEI BUT RESISTANCE HAS PROVEN TO BE QUITE FIERCE AND VICTORY IS STILL FAR-AWAY. AS SUCH, HE ORDERS FOR YOUR FORCES TO ASSIST IN CAPTURING HEFEI.

WHAT? AND ABANDON MY POSITION HERE IN JINGZHOU?

HAVING ONLY GAINED SIGNIFICANT CASUAL-TIES BUT NOTHING TO SHOW FOR IT, ZHOU YU AND HIS ARMY WERE RETREATED WITH MUCH REGRET


AS THE SAYING GOES, WHAT'S EASILY EARNED IS EASILY LOST. YOUR PLAN MAY HAVE EARNED ME 3 CASTLES BUT I'M HESITANT TOWARDS THE FUTURE.

IF NOT FOR YOUR PERSEVERANCE AND DILIGENCE IN THE PAST, NOT EVEN I WOULD BE HERE TO HELP YOU ACHIEVE THESE GAINS RIGHT NOW.
I WOULD NOT CALL OUR RECENT GAINS EASILY EARNED, MY LORD. THEY ARE PAST HARD-EFFORTS BEARING FRUIT AT LAST.

THE LARGER MY LORD'S TERRITORIES BECOME, THE MORE TALENTED MEN YOU'LL NEED TO GOVERN AND DEFEND IT PROPERLY.

GATHER MEN OF ABILITY. HUMAN RESOURCES MEAN EVERYTHING.

WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST FOR OUR NEXT COURSE OF ACTION?

YES, THERE ARE.

ARE THERE ANY OTHER TALENTED MEN HERE IN JINGZHOU AND XIANGYANG, HOWEVER?

I SEE.

IN YICHENG, THE PEOPLE ALL HIGHLY SPEAK OF MA LIANG. MA LIANG IS ONE OF MA FAMILY'S 5 SONS AND THE YOUNGEST MA SU IS ALSO SAID TO BE QUITE TALENTED IN MARTIAL MATTERS.

I HEAR YI JI IS A CLOSE FRIEND TO THE MA BROTHERS SO WHY NOT ASK HIM TO INTRODUCE THEM TO YOU?

AND HOW COULD I BEST CONVINCE THEM TO AID ME?

EXCELLENT IDEA.

AT ONCE.

PLEASE ASK YI JI TO COME SEE ME.

YOU THERE.

YOU CALLED, MY LORD?

FOR WHAT PURPOSE AM I CALLED HERE TODAY, MY LORD?

THANK YOU FOR COMING, YI JI.

YES, MY LORD HAS HEARD CORRECTLY.

I HEAR YOU ARE ON GOOD TERMS WITH THE 5 MA BROTHERS...

I SHALL GO PERSUADE THEM AT ONCE THEN.

AHH, SO YOU WISH FOR THEIR SERVICE? A WISE CHOICE, MY LORD.

WOULD IT BE TOO MUCH TROUBLE TO ASK THEM TO LEND THEIR AID TO ME?

THANK YOU, YI JI.

WITH YI JI'S PERSUASION, MA LIANG HIMSELF CAME TO VISIT LIU BEI SHORTLY AFTER.

NOT AT ALL, BUT I DOUBT HOW MUCH HELP MY HUMBLE SELF WILL BE.

THANK YOU FOR COMING. IF YOU DO NOT MIND, I'D LIKE TO ASK FOR YOUR WISDOM ON A CERTAIN MATTER...

MA LIANG WAS NOTED FOR HIS INTELLECT AND UNUSUAL WHITE EYEBROWS, WHICH CAUSED THE PEOPLE IN HIS VILLAGE TO REMARK, "5 BROTHERS OF THE SAME MA BLOOD BUT ONLY WHITE EYEBROWS IS WITHOUT PEER."

I HAVE RECENTLY ACQUIRED 3 CASTLES BUT MY IMMEDIATE PLANS FOR THE FUTURE ARE MURKY AT BEST. AS A NATIVE OF THESE LANDS, WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE I SHOULD NOW DO?

FOR NOW, LET LIU QI RECUPERATE HERE IN JINGZHOU AND OBTAIN AN IMPERIAL EDICT APPOINTING HIM AS JINGZHOU'S IMPERIAL PROTECTOR.

XIANGYANG IS A LAND THAT CAN BE EASILY SURROUNDED BY ENEMIES ON ALL FOUR SIDES AND I FEAR IT WON'T REMAIN UNDER YOUR CONTROL FOR LONG.

ONCE THAT IS DONE, YOU SHOULD GO ON TO SECURE YOUR HOLDINGS HERE BY CONQUERING THE FOUR SOUTHERN COMMANDERIES OF JINGZHOU.

YES, I SEE...

OF COURSE, CONSIDERING LIU QI'S FRAGILE HEALTH, YOU SHOULD CALL FORTH LIU BIAO'S FORMER RETAINERS AND LEAVE THE GOVERNANCE OF JINGZHOU TO THEM. THIS WILL ENSURE THE CITIZENS HERE THAT THEY ARE NOW IN GOOD HANDS.

WULING, OWNED BY JIN XUAN.

WHICH COMMANDERIES DO YOU SPEAK OF AND WHO ARE THEIR CURRENT LORDS?

THESE FOUR COMMANDERIES ARE RICH IN FISH AND RICE, MAKING THEM KEY TO PROTECTING YOUR NEWLY ACQUIRED TERRITORIES.

CHANGSHA BY HAN XUAN, GUIYANG BY ZHAO FAN, AND LINGLING BY LIU DU.

WHICH OF THE 4 COMMAN-DERIES SHOULD I FIRST CONQUER THEN?

WELL SAID...

AFTER THAT SHOULD COME GUIYANG AND WULING, LEAVING CHANGSHA AS YOUR LAST TARGET.

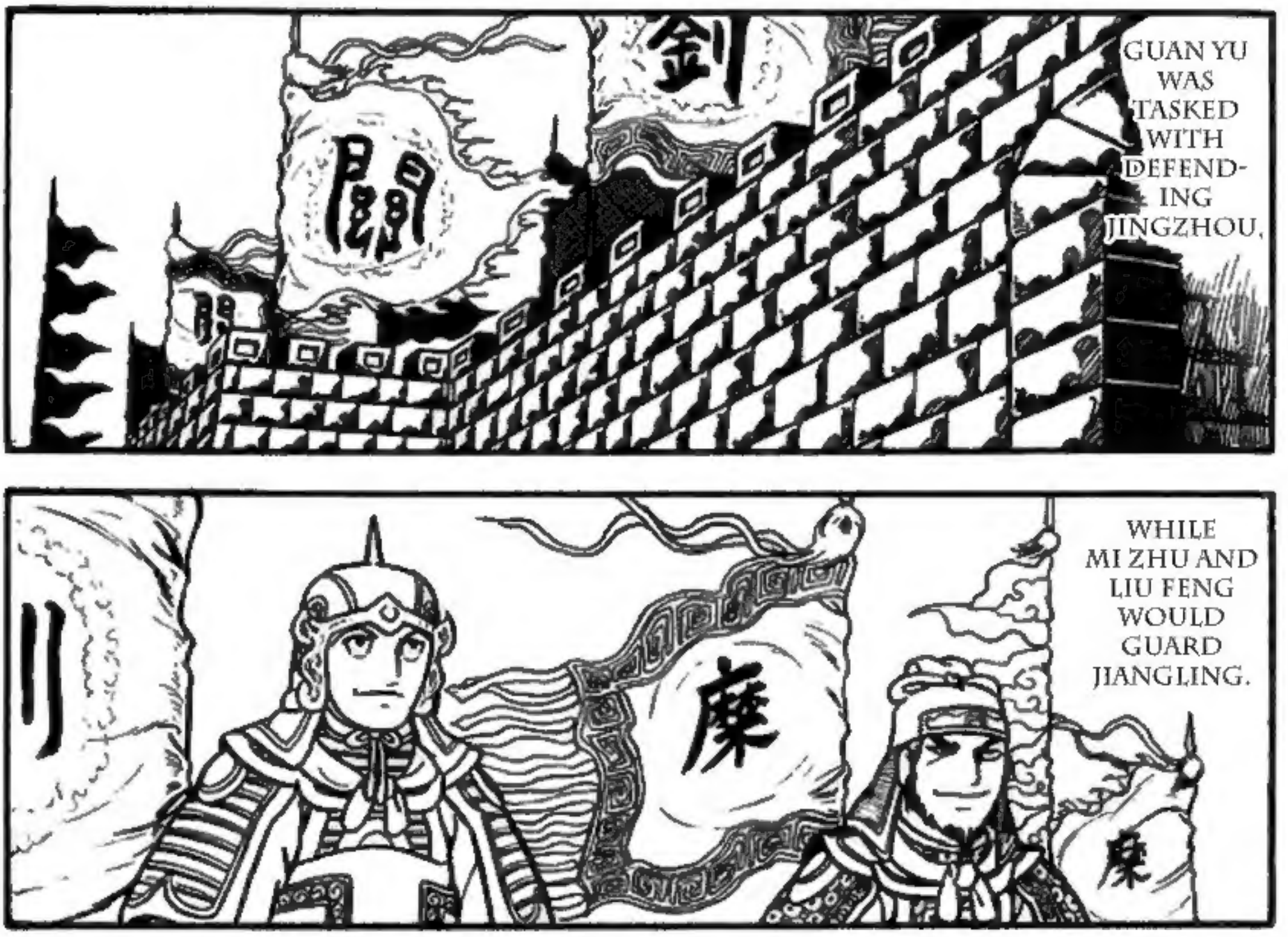
I RECOMMEND THE CLOSEST COMMANDERY TO YOU, LINGLING, SITUATED WEST OF THE XIANG RIVER.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR FINE WISDOM, MA LIANG.

AN ARMY SHOULD MARCH IN THE SAME DIRECTION A RIVER FLOWS, AS TO SIMPLIFY LOGISTICS AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.

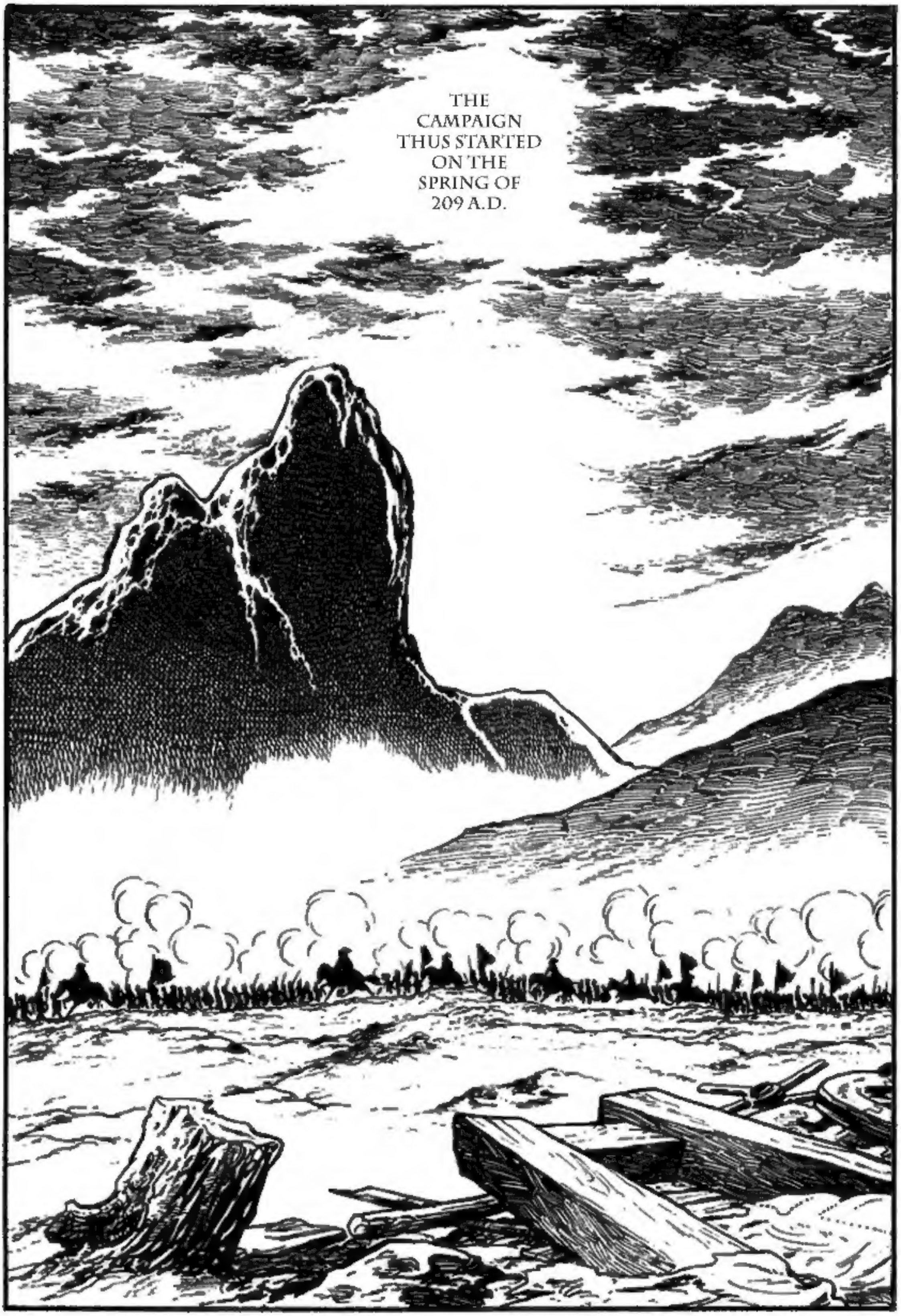
AND SO, THE GENERALS WERE ALL CALLED TO DISCUSS THE PLAN TO ATTACK LINGLING, GUIYANG, WULING, AND CHANGSHA. ALL WERE IN FAVOUR OF THE PLAN

WITH THE FINAL ARRANGEMENTS MADE, THE PLAN WAS NOW SET INTO MOTION.


GUAN YU WAS TASKED WITH DEFEND-ING JINGZHOU,
WHILE MI ZHU AND LIU FENG WOULD GUARD JIANGLING.
AS FOR THE ARMY THAT MOBILIZED, ZHANG FEI LED THE VANGUARD,

LIU BEI AND ZHUGE LIANG LED THE MAIN FORCES,

AND ZHAO ZILONG GUARDED THE REAR. THEIR TOTAL NUMBERED AT 15,000.



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横山 光輝

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Original 潮出版社 希望コミックス

Digital Distributor
eBOOK Initiative Japan Co.,Ltd.
〒101-0062　東京都千代田区神田駿河台 2-9-18
http://www.ebookjapan.jp